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FEBRUARY
2025

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IN THIS ISSUE

- SMART LIVING AREAS
- SLEEK BEDROOMS
- VERSATILE KITCHENS
- COLOURFUL BATHROOMS

New looks you'll love

PAGES OF INSPIRATION FOR UPDATING YOUR HOME

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apartment

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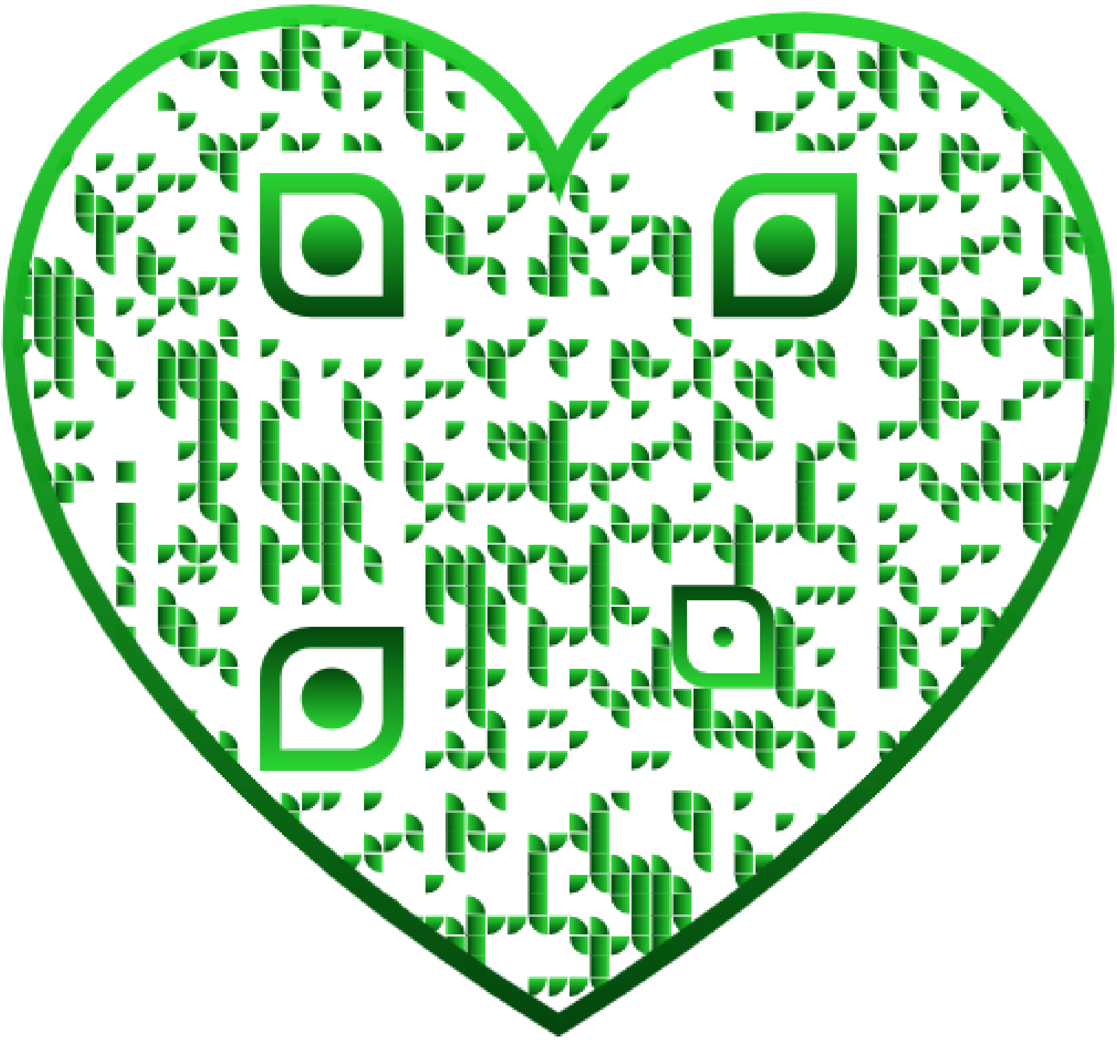

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25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

SEE INSIDE MORE REAL HOMES THAN ANY OTHER MAGAZINE

February 2025

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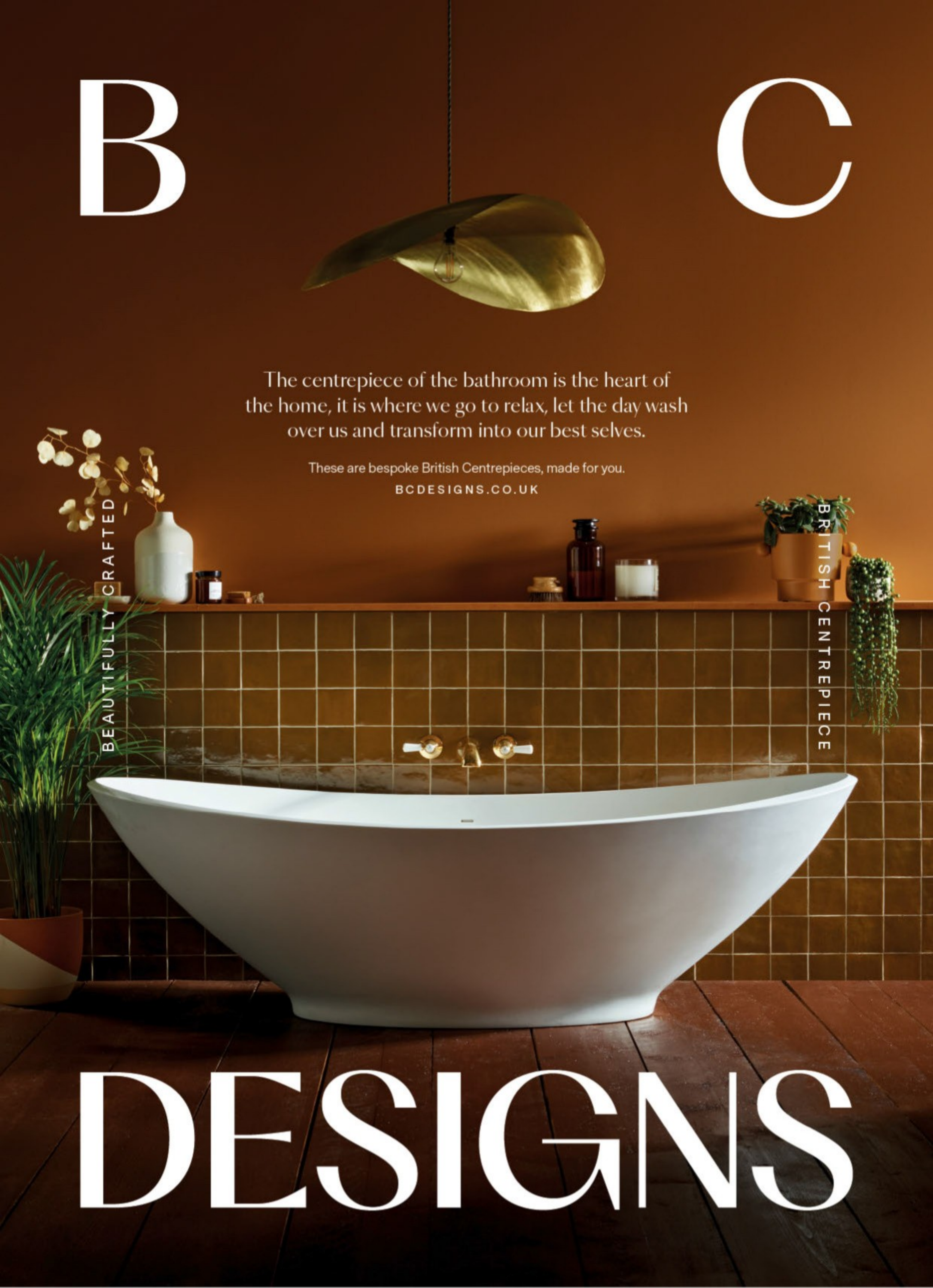
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Welcome

New year – new-look home? If you're in planing mode, we have spaces big and small to inspire you this month. Flexibility was key for empty nesters Lesley and Paul Owen when they revamped their country house to suit their new lifestyle and the results are amazing (p8). Kate and James Thompson also undertook a total renovation and brought a derelict former carriage workshop back to life (p40). For Anna Foster, it was the irresistible appeal of an abandoned plot and two old barns that marked the start of a three-year journey that has ended with the most stunning house (p110). Whatever changes you'd like to make this year, enjoy the planning and all the transformations in this issue.

FIONA MACE, EDITOR

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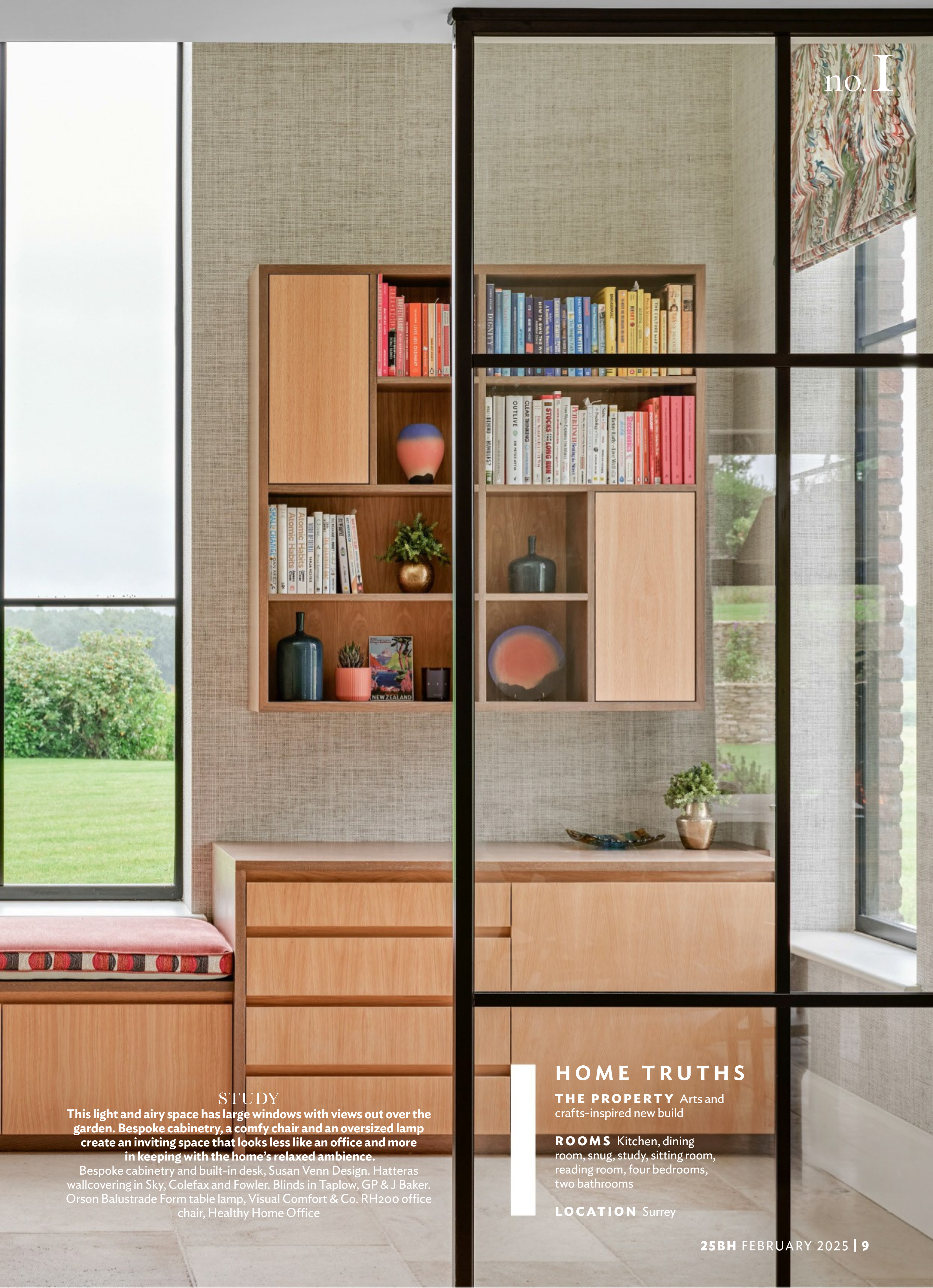
Recycle

| HOUSE OF THE MONTH |

Best of BOTH WORLDS

Upsizing rather than downsizing has given empty nesters Lesley and Paul Owen a flexible home – one that's perfect for a couple but also ideal for hosting visiting family

WORDS KAREN JENSEN-JONES
PHOTOGRAPHY NICK SMITH



STUDY

This light and airy space has large windows with views out over the garden. Bespoke cabinetry, a comfy chair and an oversized lamp create an inviting space that looks less like an office and more in keeping with the home's relaxed ambience.
Bespoke cabinetry and built-in desk, Susan Venn Design. Hatteras wallcovering in Sky, Colefax and Fowler. Blinds in Taplow, GP & J Baker. Orson Balustrade Form table lamp, Visual Comfort & Co. RH200 office chair, Healthy Home Office

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Arts and crafts-inspired new build

ROOMS Kitchen, dining room, snug, study, sitting room, reading room, four bedrooms, two bathrooms

LOCATION Surrey

the decision to upsize rather than downsize was an obvious choice for Lesley and Paul Owen when their Victorian family home was no longer serving their lifestyle. ‘Once our three children had left home, we were looking for a more intimate living arrangement, but we also wanted plenty of space for when they visit with the grandchildren,’ explains Lesley. ‘And we love to host, especially at Christmas, so there were lots of factors to consider.’

Lesley became more confident after finding a sprawling new build in Surrey, and considered how the sizeable house could evolve to suit this new phase in their life. ‘Once we’d viewed the house, with its generous gardens and peaceful location, we were in no doubt that it could work for us,’ remembers Lesley. ‘The ground floor was open plan with enormous potential, but the project did feel daunting. Fortunately, our luck was in when we met interior designer Susan Venn of Susan Venn Design who immediately understood our specific requirements and we breathed a sigh of relief.’

Susan was keen to make the most of the large footprint, making it a multifunctional space with carefully zoned areas specifically tailored to suit Lesley and Paul’s needs. With a combination of 3D modelling, mood boards and comprehensive project management, the collaborative process uncovered the couple’s distinctive style, which is echoed throughout the property.

‘We both love earthy colours and natural materials and used the exposed brick chimney wall in the sitting room as a starting point for our colour scheme,’ explains Lesley. The rusty tone of the curtain fabric is a distinctive contrast against the dark window frames, with patterned cushions peppered around the room and textured sofas adding the perfect colour balance.

‘Susan has created the most relaxing and welcoming environment where it feels easy to unwind, with an understated elegance that really sums up our style,’ enthuses Lesley.

A dedicated reading room was another essential requirement, with Susan using calming shades of green and blue. Bespoke joinery, deep, comfortable armchairs and a selection of reading lamps provide a functional and stylish nook for curling up with a good book. ‘Susan’s experience was invaluable as she was always thinking ahead – for example, suggesting adding TV points to the room in case we change the use in the future,’ says Lesley.

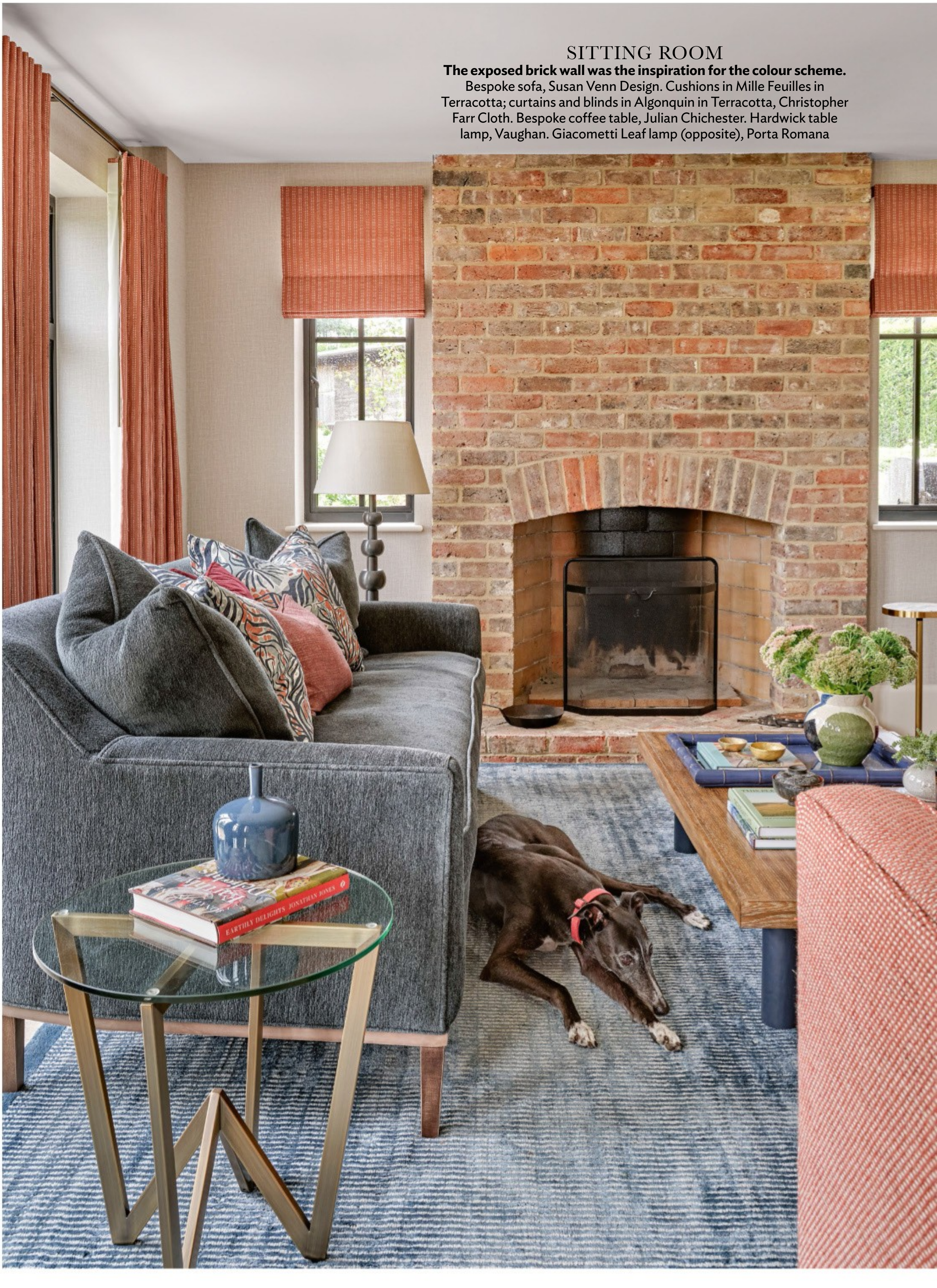
Entertaining and cooking for family is especially important to the couple with the kitchen and dining room at the heart of their home. Our challenge was to have a long dining table to accommodate our family gatherings of 12, but which didn’t feel enormous when we’re on our own,’ explains Lesley. ‘In the end, we chose an extendable table in a light wood as an ideal solution to suit every occasion.’

The expansive hallway, with a grand, winding staircase, leading to beautifully designed bedrooms, has been skilfully decorated to bring warmth to the space using a soft blue hue for walls and skirting boards. A circular rug on the ground floor and a patterned window seat with cushions halfway up the stairs add texture for further softness in the space.

‘I’m still amazed how Susan managed to fit in everything from our brief,’ says Lesley. ‘The ground floor serves all our needs and includes a beautiful study, which has been so thoughtfully designed, you can’t see a single cable or charger.’

The move has been a resounding success for Lesley and Paul. Adjusting to a new home can be a challenge, but they have found the ideal solution for the next exciting chapter in their lives.

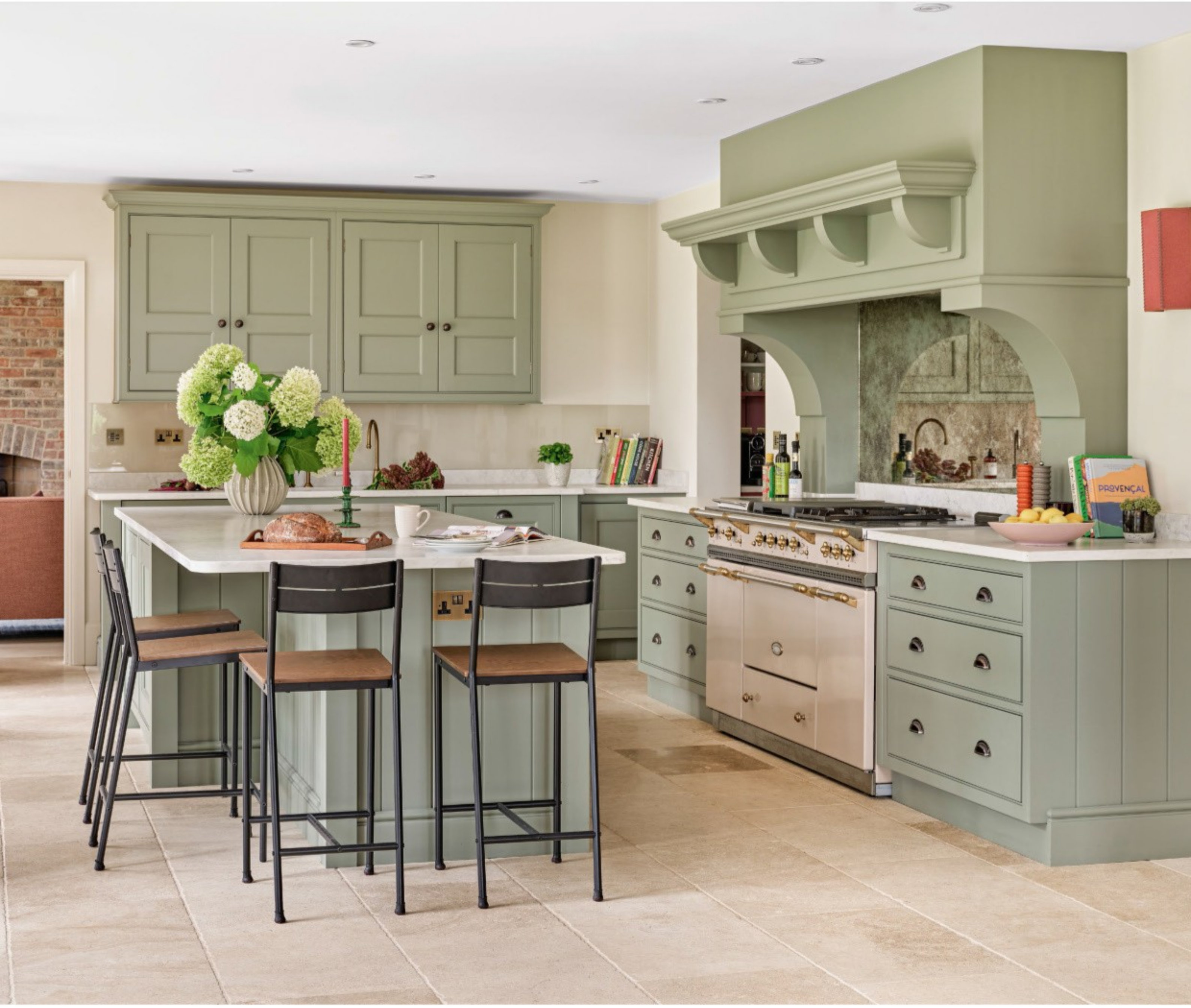
susanvenn.com



SITTING ROOM

The exposed brick wall was the inspiration for the colour scheme. Bespoke sofa, Susan Venn Design. Cushions in Mille Feuilles in Terracotta; curtains and blinds in Algonquin in Terracotta, Christopher Farr Cloth. Bespoke coffee table, Julian Chichester. Hardwick table lamp, Vaughan. Giacometti Leaf lamp (opposite), Porta Romana

‘Using the orange colour at the back of the joinery in the reading room makes the shelving sing and adds another dimension to the space’



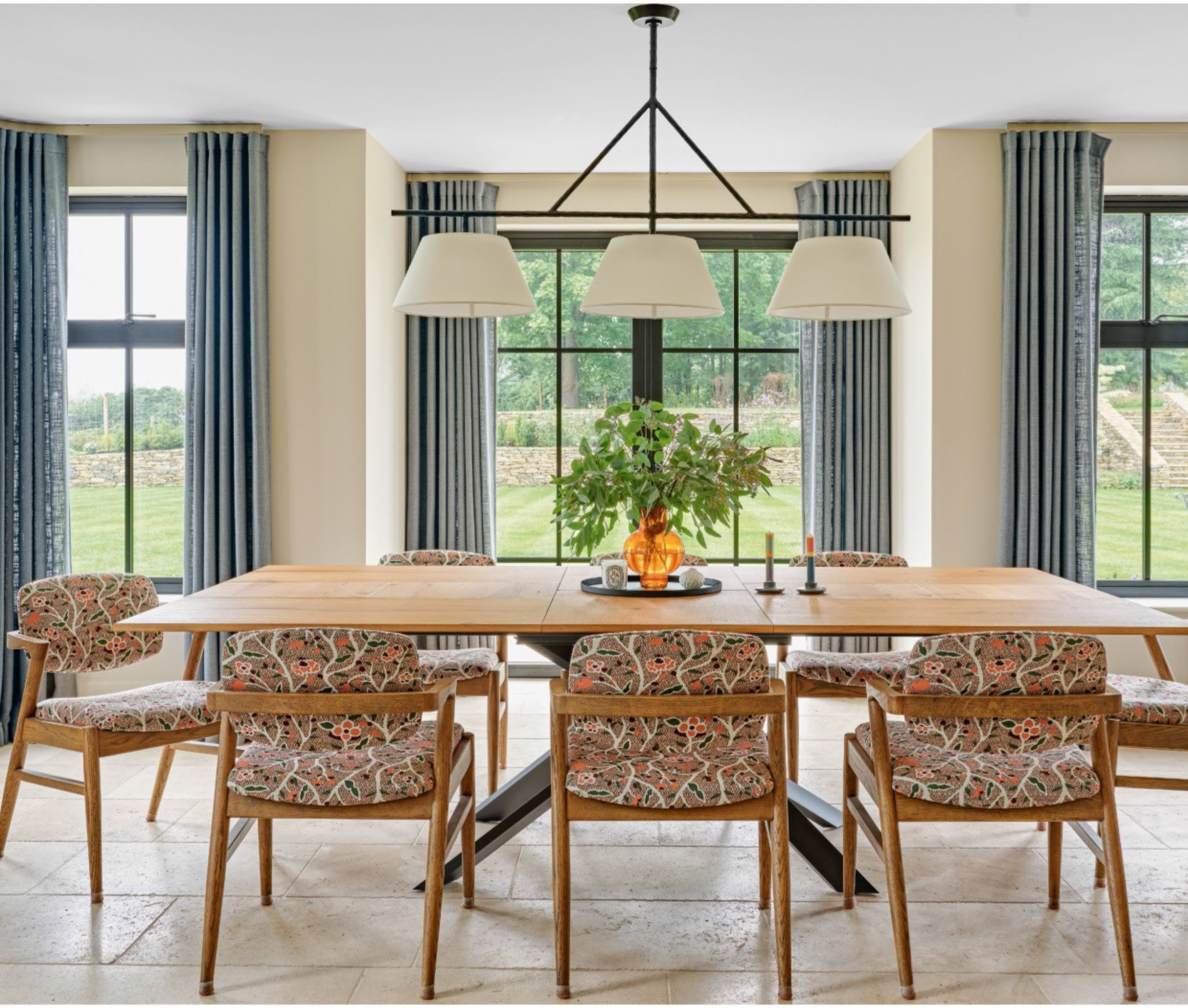
READING ROOM

Handmade joinery with plenty of space for books makes this the perfect evening retreat for keen readers. The calming palette of greens and blues suits the peaceful nature of the room. Bespoke cabinetry, Susan Venn Design; painted in Three Farm Green, Little Greene. Bespoke armchair, Susan Venn Design. Pouffe in Lounet in Multicolour, Pierre Frey. Onda rug, William Yeoward. Gioco wallcovering in Grey, Arte

KITCHEN

Shaker-style units, an antiqued mirror splashback and limestone tumble-edged flooring add a traditional quality to the room. Taking inspiration from the views to the garden, the cabinets are painted in a soft green hue. For similar cabinetry, try Martin Moore. Farrow & Ball’s Lichen is a similar colour. Range cooker in Rose Quartz, Lacanche. Luxor bar stools are similar, Peppermill Interiors. Limestone floor tiles, Mandarin Stone

‘We didn’t want the ceiling light in the hallway to be too ostentatious, but we knew it needed to be slightly grand to fill the space’



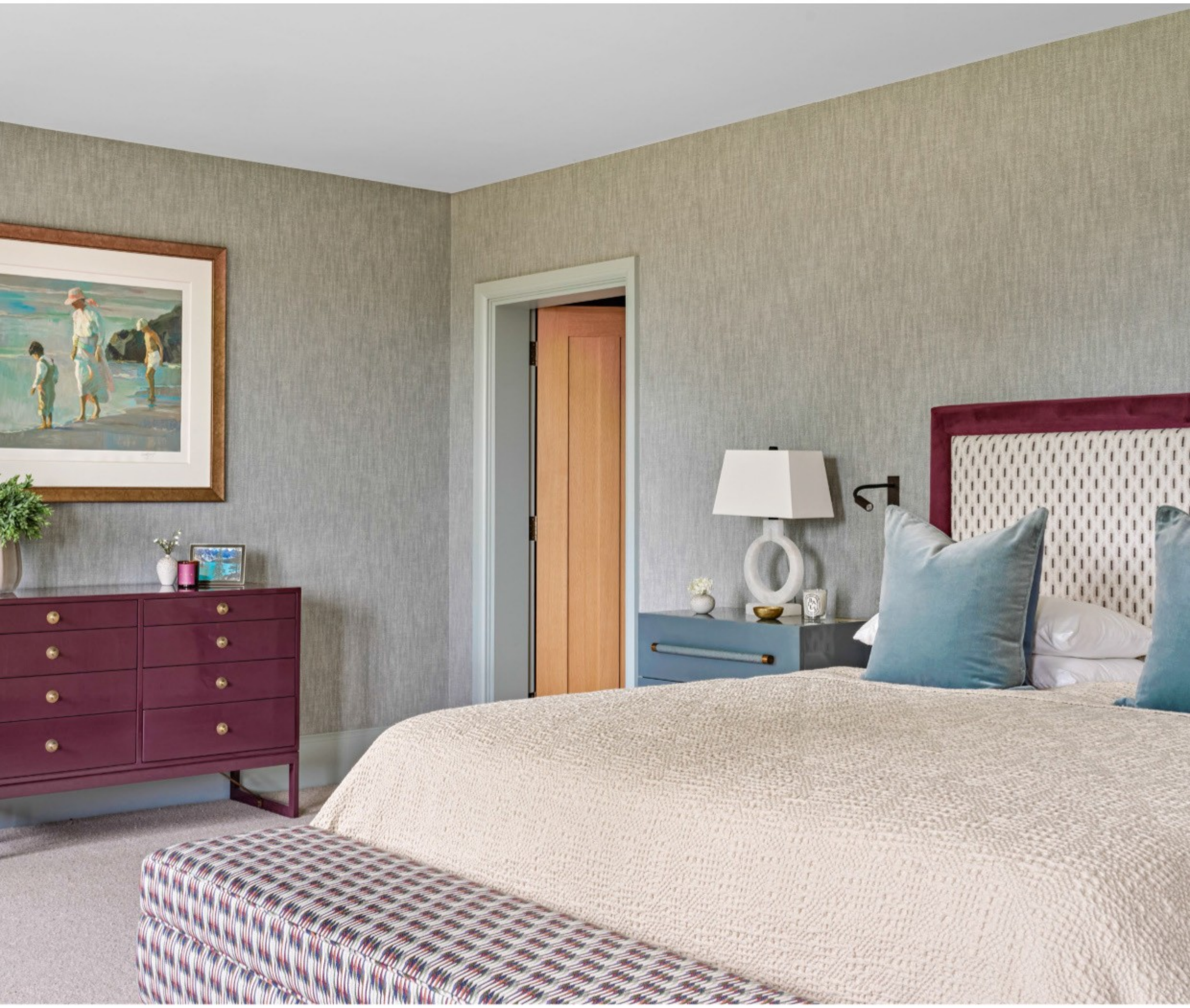
DINING ROOM

This entertaining space is very firmly at the heart of Lesley and Paul’s new home. ‘We adore spending time with our family, enjoying Sunday lunch or just gathered around sharing stories.’
Dining chairs in Rio Bossa Nova in Terrasses Urbaines, Élitis. Case Cross extendable dining table, Cimmermann, is similar. Curtains in Bruges in Fjord, Warwick. Try Henley triple bar pendant light, Industville

HALLWAY

The curve of the staircase is echoed in the choice of rug and table. Susan went for a soft blue wall colour to warm the oversized space and added pops of colour through artwork.
Walls and skirting in Light Blue, Farrow & Ball. Bespoke circular rug, Rugmart. Round Seren entry table, Arteriors. Santa & Cole Cirio chandelier, Holloways of Ludlow. Artwork from the couple’s collection

‘A streamlined shower enclosure can be created with false walls and then just a single glazed panel at the front’



EN SUITE

The statement copper bath is the focal point and is another expression of Lesley and Paul’s bold yet understated style – ‘It’s one of our most favourite pieces in the house.’

La Rochelle Aere Bateau copper bath is similar, Cast Iron Bath Company. Try Amazon Green Gloss marble-effect porcelain tiles, Mandarin Stone, for similar flooring

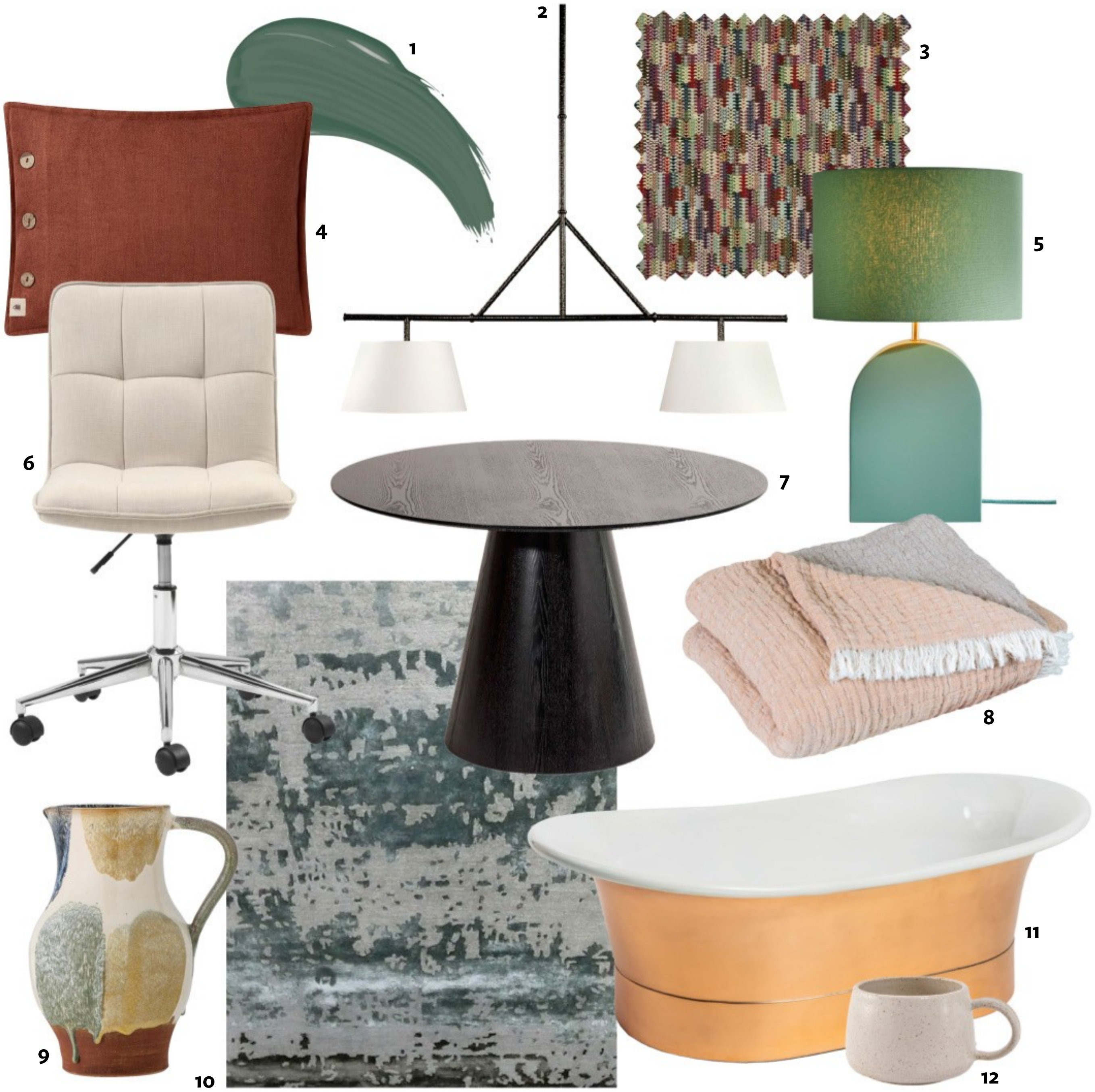
MAIN BEDROOM

Textured wallpaper and patterned fabric create interest, with a palette of colours taken from a favourite piece of artwork helping to create a haven of tranquillity.

Wallcovering, Omexco. Chest of drawers with round pulls in Farrow & Ball’s Brinjal, Chelsea Textiles. Ottoman in Alula in Sauge by Lelievre, Jane Clayton. Ring Form table lamp, Andrew Martin. Artwork from the couple’s collection. Headboard in Nao, Colefax and Fowler

STYLE *inspiration*

Follow Lesley's lead and experiment with layered textures and rich colour accents to create inviting interiors



1 Wall paint in Marshland Green, £55 for 2.5ltr, Thorndown **2** Lancaster kitchen downlight, £1,975, Vaughan **3** Lounet fabric in Multicolore, £195m, Pierre Frey **4** Stretch Easy Squish scatter cushion in Terracotta Linen, £29, Loaf **5** Terrarium arch table lamp, £149, Dowsing & Reynolds **6** Ashton office chair in Stone Linen, £150, The Cotswold Company **7** Hansen pedestal dining table, £399, Where Saints Go **8** The Crinkle cotton throw in Honey, £95, Naturalmat **9** Hayes deco vase in Blue/Terracotta, £41.90, Bloomingville **10** Varese rug in Grey, from £840, Linie Design at Heal's **11** Copper and White bath, £2,997, Indigenous **12** Speckle stoneware mug in White, £25, Not Just a Shop

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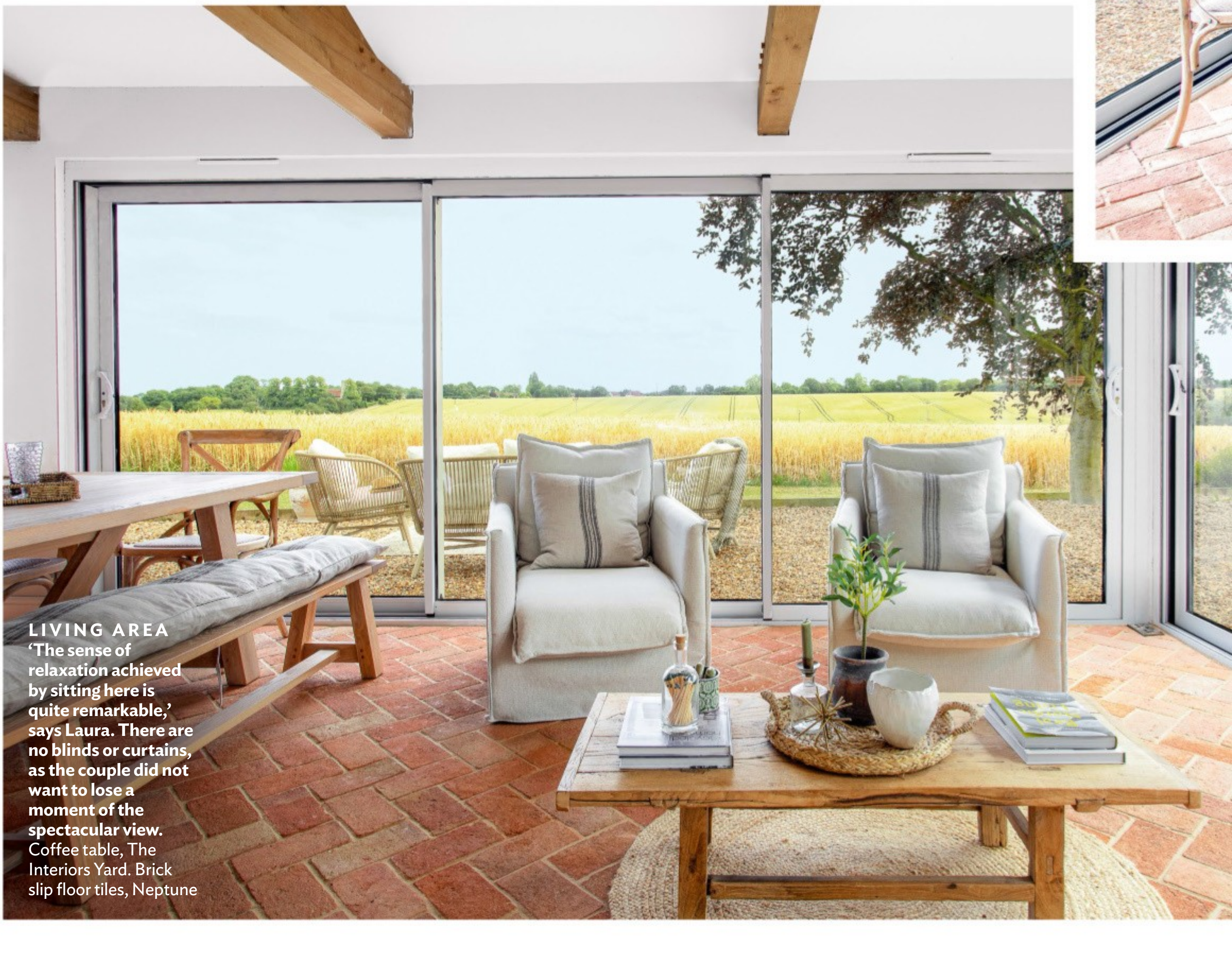
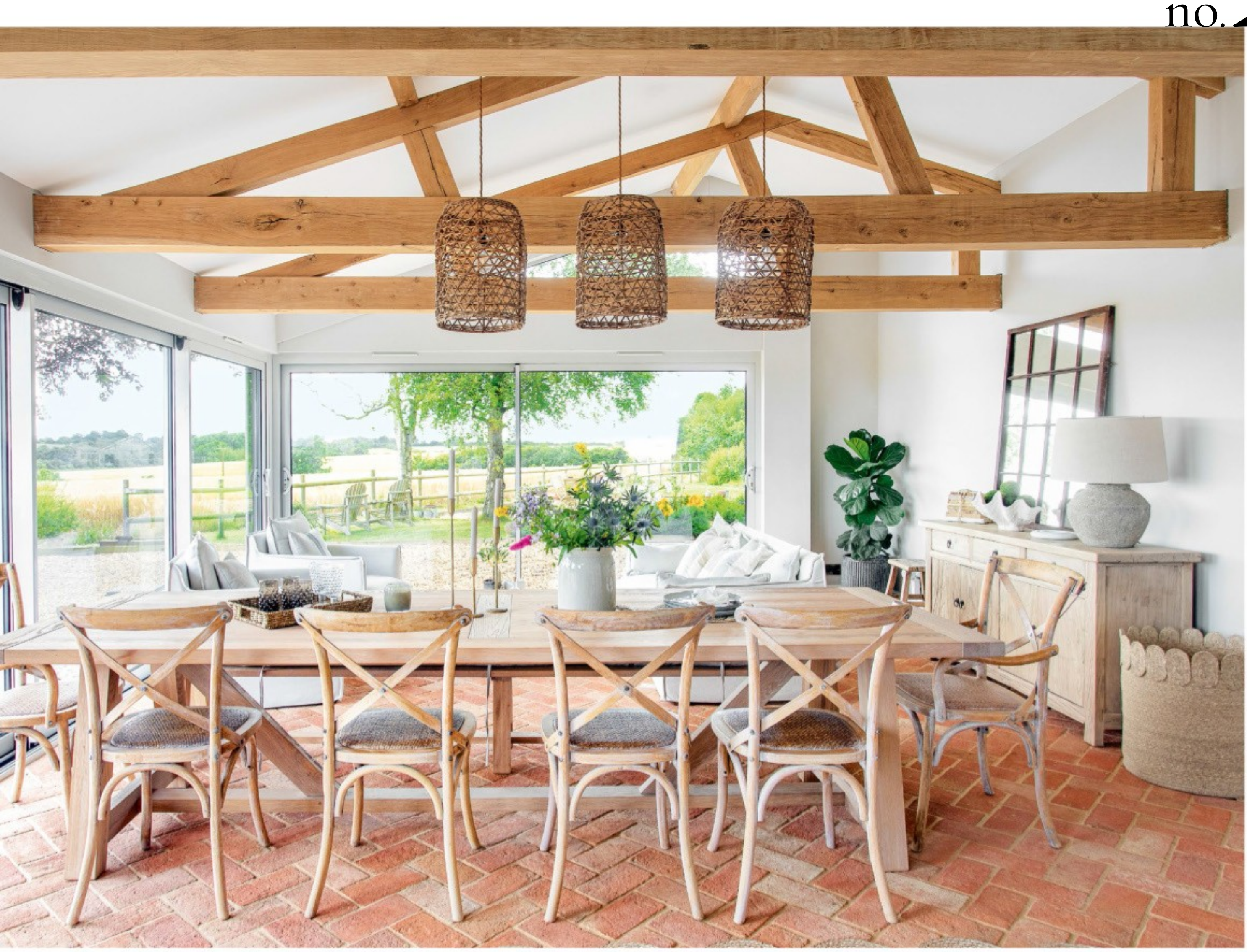
Rooms with A VIEW

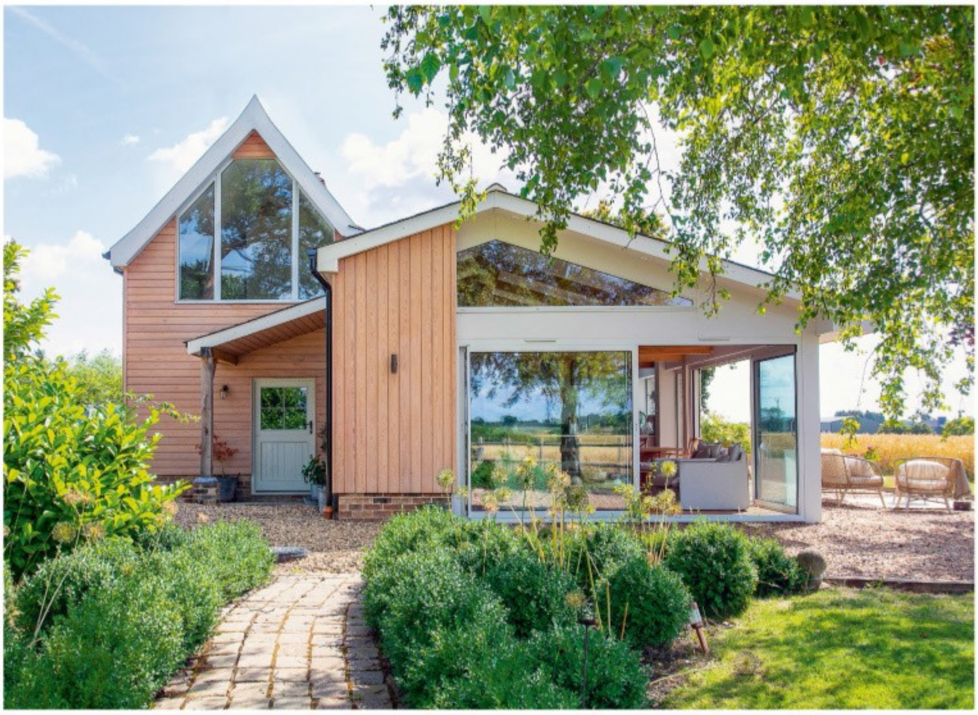
Laura Emmerson has extended her Suffolk farmhouse to make the most of the views of the surrounding fields and give her young family the country lifestyle she craves for them

WORDS ALISON GIBB | **PHOTOGRAPHY** DOUGLAS GIBB



LIVING AREA **'The sense of relaxation achieved by sitting here is quite remarkable,' says Laura. There are no blinds or curtains, as the couple did not want to lose a moment of the spectacular view.** Coffee table, The Interiors Yard. Brick slip floor tiles, Neptune





DINING AREA **Laura and Shaun love hosting here and they can squeeze quite a crowd around the table.** Table; bench, both Neptune. Bench cushion, Country Abodes. Chairs, Snape Maltings. Rattan pendant lights, Nkuku. Isaac sofa, Sofa.com

EXTERIOR **Outside, the stunning views and the original part of the house all blend perfectly with the contemporary extension. There are magical spots all over the garden from where you can enjoy the beautiful rural views**

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Extended farmhouse, originally built in the 1800s

ROOMS
Kitchen-diner/living area, sitting room, snug, cloakroom, five bedrooms, three bathrooms

LOCATION
Suffolk

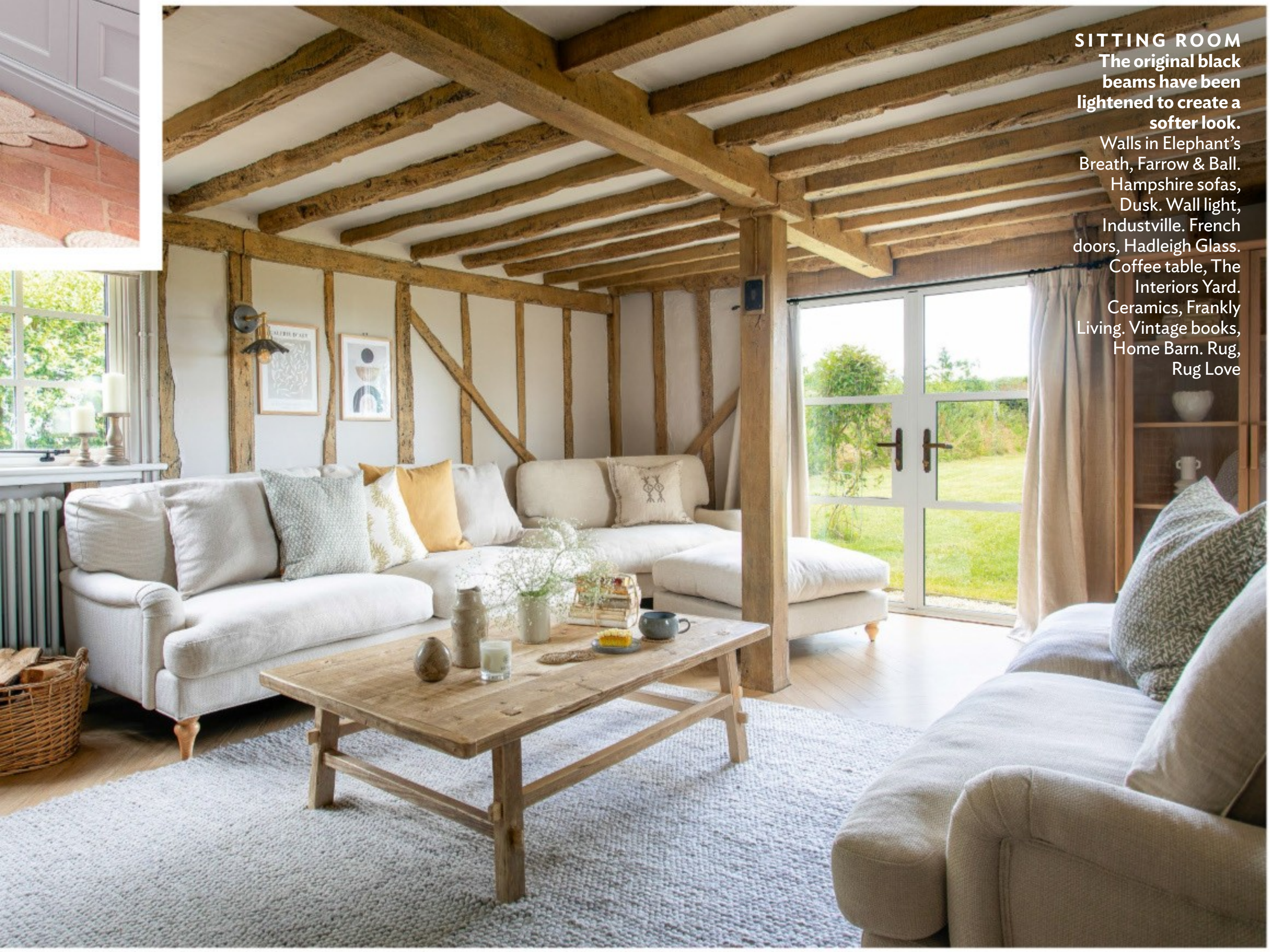
KITCHEN
Laura chose a quartz worktop and an apron-fronted fluted Belfast sink with an antique brass mixer tap. Cabinetry, Howdens. Sink, Shaws of Darwen. Tap, Perrin & Rowe. Windows, Hadleigh Glass. Walls in Shingle, Neptune. Stools, Oka. Scalloped runners, La Redoute

UTILITY ROOM
This keeps everything in one space, making it easier to keep the rest of the house clutter free. Cabinetry, Howdens. Floor tiles, Topps Tiles. Belfast sink, Shaws of Darwen

When Laura Emmerson first viewed this property, located in a peaceful Suffolk village, she could immediately visualise the extension they would add. 'I knew I could bring order to what was a very higgledy-piggledy home,' she explains. She and her husband Shaun were moving out of London to the countryside with their young children, Annabel, eight, Willa, six and Rory, four, and they wanted an older property that they could modernise and shape to their needs. 'I really wanted to give our children a country childhood,' she shares.

Laura and Shaun started with a basic upgrade to the decor, making do with the small but perfectly usable kitchen in what is now the snug, and dealing with practical jobs, such as updating the septic tank and clearing the garden, including the overgrown conifers surrounding the house. 'We cut them all down as you could hardly see the garden, let alone the views,' Laura recalls. In the meantime, they were thinking through their grander plans in detail. Laura researched copiously and created mood boards, and she and Shaun spent many evenings drawing ideas on a piece of paper over a glass of wine.

After five years, they finally got started on the extension. 'Having lived in the cottage for so long, we had a really good idea of what we wanted to achieve. We used a brilliant local architect with lots of relevant experience who helped bring our ideas to life,' Laura explains. 'He didn't change much at all,' she happily reports. Planning was straightforward and once



SITTING ROOM
The original black beams have been lightened to create a softer look.
Walls in Elephant's Breath, Farrow & Ball. Hampshire sofas, Dusk. Wall light, Industville. French doors, Hadleigh Glass. Coffee table, The Interiors Yard. Ceramics, Frankly Living. Vintage books, Home Barn. Rug, Rug Love

work started, the extension took eight months to complete, with the couple living in the house with their three children during the build.

There were plenty of challenging moments during the project, of course, including the time the family unexpectedly had no hot water or heating during a really cold winter. 'We are positive people, which I think helps when you are going through something so big in your life,' explains Laura. 'And Shaun and I complement each other; he is calm and practical, whereas I am more creative and inspired.'

The new space has a tremendously calming feel, with soft grey interiors given life and character through the warmth of herringbone brick floors, wooden beams and soft linen upholstery. Injections of inky black in the snug and the graphic tiles of the bathroom add a dramatic counterpoint. 'It was very satisfying, having given the project so much thought in advance, seeing everything fall into place so perfectly,' Laura shares. Looking ahead, finishing the garden is a long-term project for the couple. Top of the list is to create a wraparound terrace, with some cosy corners. 'The site is quite open, so we need to create some private nooks to star gaze,' Laura says.

'We are so pleased with the finished home we have created and everyone is happy here. All the children can go to school in the village, and we've just had our first harvest celebration in the new extension. We're looking forward to making lots of memories here over the years.'

See more of Laura's house @cottagebythefield

BEDROOM
Located downstairs, this space, with en-suite bathroom, has been designed as a relaxing, peaceful sanctuary. Walls in Strong White, Farrow & Ball. Woven stool, La Redoute. Wall light, Industville

> ‘A SLIDING BARN-STYLE DOOR IS A SPACE-SAVING OPTION BETWEEN THE GUEST BEDROOM AND EN SUITE’

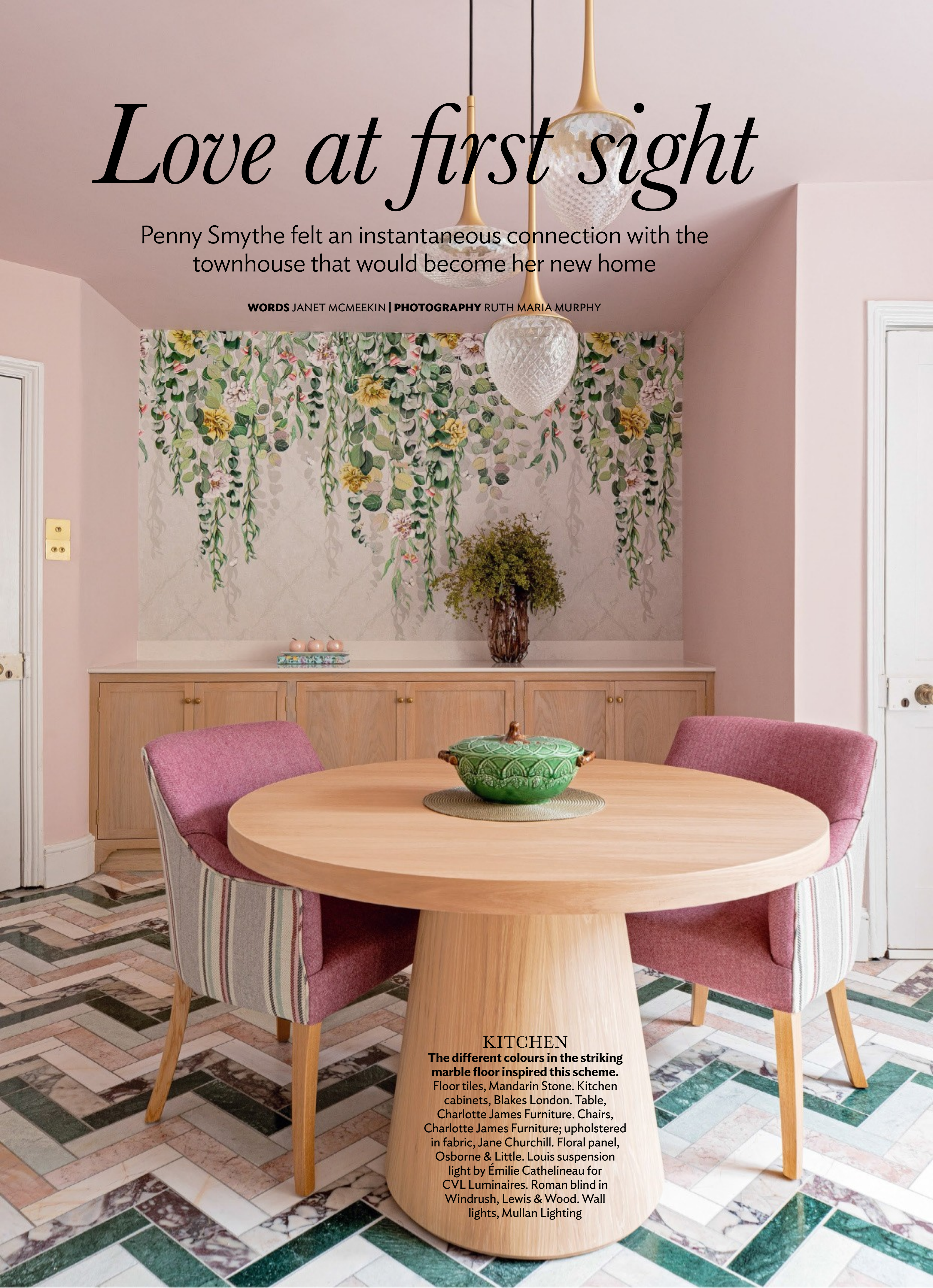
MAIN BEDROOM
This was designed as part of the extension to make the most of the stunning views. With its sloping ceiling, the space feels like a tranquil hideaway.
Bedside tables, Cox & Cox

EN SUITE
The free-standing bath fits the space perfectly. Laura has painted the walls with a specialist limewash to create a raw, rustic finish.
Walls in limewash paint, Bauwerk Colour. Freestanding bath, Bathroom Mountain. Wall and floor tiles, Mandarin Stone

Love at first sight

Penny Smythe felt an instantaneous connection with the townhouse that would become her new home

WORDS JANET MCMEEKIN | **PHOTOGRAPHY** RUTH MARIA MURPHY



KITCHEN

The different colours in the striking marble floor inspired this scheme. Floor tiles, Mandarin Stone. Kitchen cabinets, Blakes London. Table, Charlotte James Furniture. Chairs, Charlotte James Furniture; upholstered in fabric, Jane Churchill. Floral panel, Osborne & Little. Louis suspension light by Émilie Cathelineau for CVL Luminaires. Roman blind in Windrush, Lewis & Wood. Wall lights, Mullan Lighting

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Terraced townhouse built in 1840

ROOMS Sitting room, dining room, kitchen, TV room, two cloakrooms, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, dressing room

LOCATION North London

TV ROOM
The basement television room with its nutmeg and charcoal tones is a dramatic space.
Kinetic artwork by Patrick Rubinstein. Corner sofa, Charlotte James Furniture; upholstered in Martello, Clarke & Clarke. Joinery in Burn Black, Sanderson

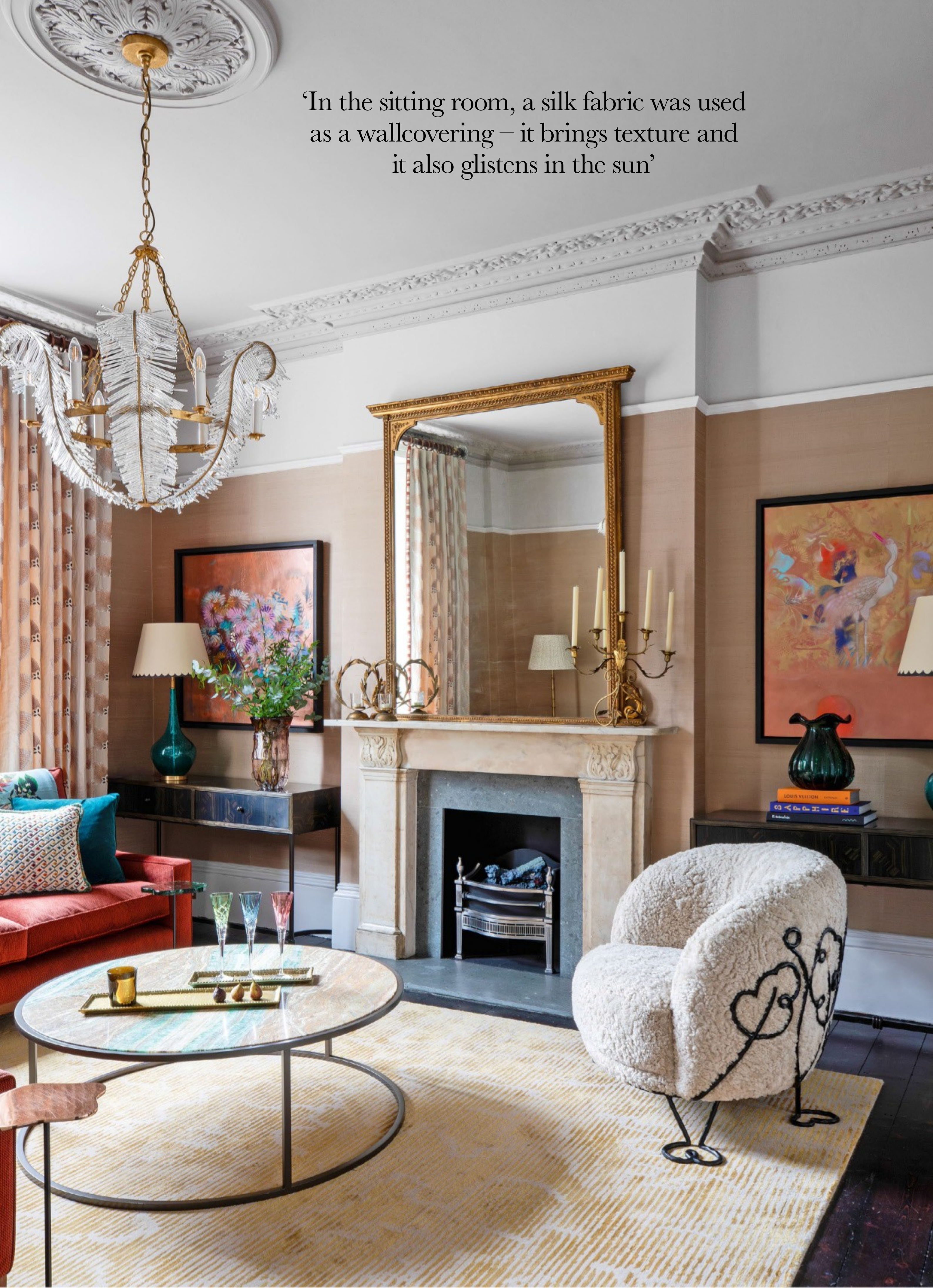
DINING ROOM
The kinetic artwork makes a statement in this intimate room.
Walls in Connaught Silk in Burgundy, James Hare. *Brigitte* artwork by Patrick Rubinstein. Table lamp, William Yeoward. Bespoke rug, The Rug Company

SITTING ROOM
'In the evening the gold tones in the paintings add an extra dimension to this glamorous room,' says Penny.
A Day in Kyoto and *Fields of Japan* paintings by Alexander Rhys. Walls in Orissa Silk in Mink, James Hare. Spring armchair, Bryan O'Sullivan Studio. Coffee table, Tom Faulkner

While visiting one of London's most photogenic areas for the very first time, Penny Smythe was so impressed with the iconic streets that she immediately began looking in estate agents' windows. 'That impromptu stroll changed my life,' Penny confides. 'I loved the energy and vibe of this part of London and felt an overwhelming urge to move here. Luckily enough, the moment I walked into this house – the third property I'd viewed – I knew it was the one.'

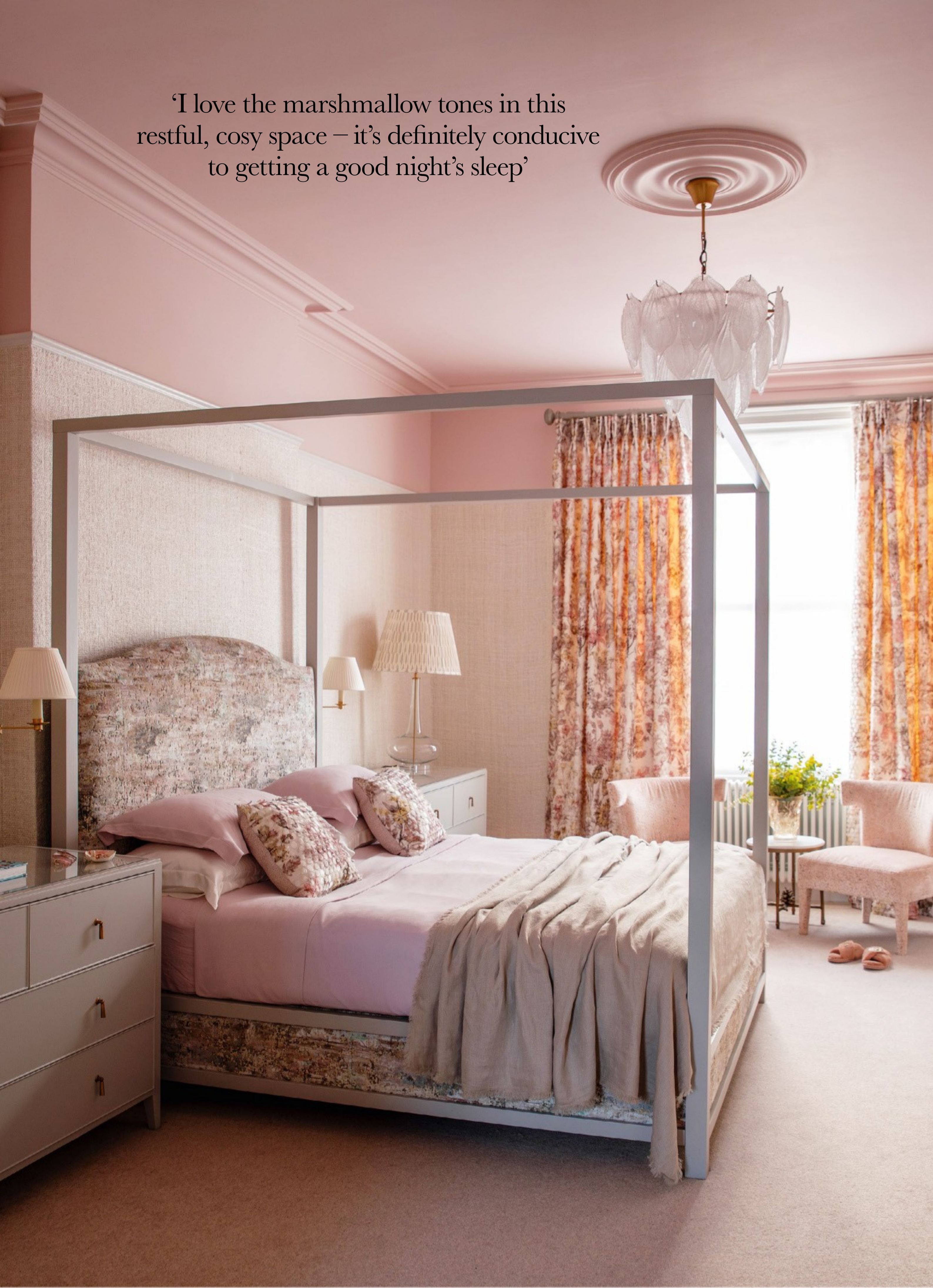
At the time, Penny was living in Central London and hadn't anticipated moving. 'During my first viewing here, as soon as I stood in the hallway, the house felt very familiar as though it was meant for me,' she reveals. 'It had beautiful bones, wonderful proportions and a sense of calm.'

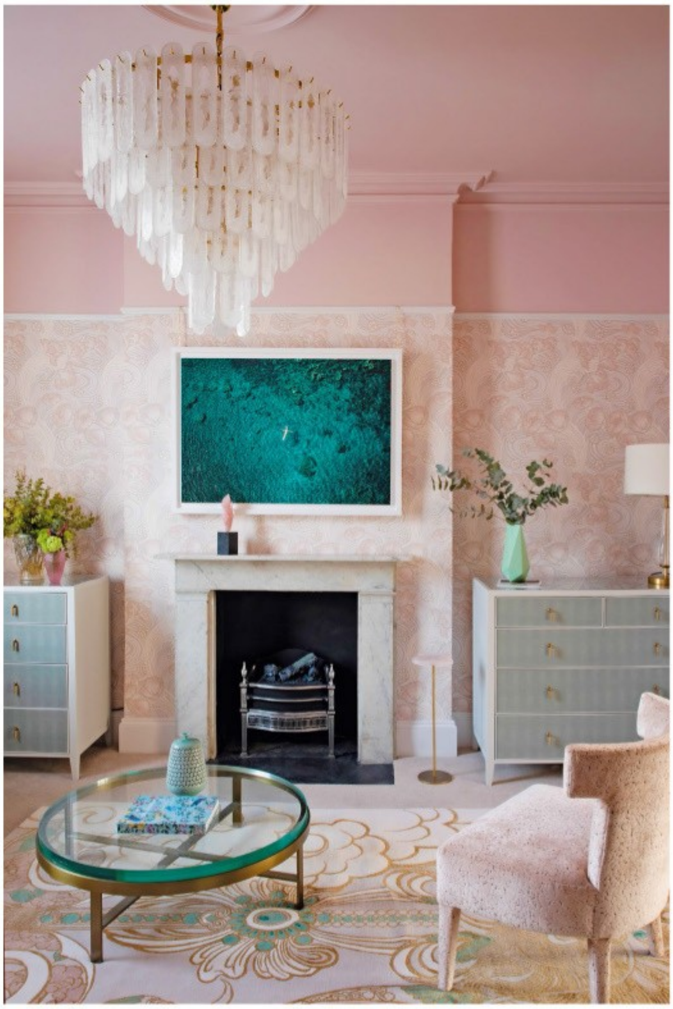
Trusting her gut instinct, Penny clinched the deal and immediately called her interior designer friend Collette Ward of Collette Ward Interiors to share the good news and ask for her help. 'I couldn't wait to get started,'

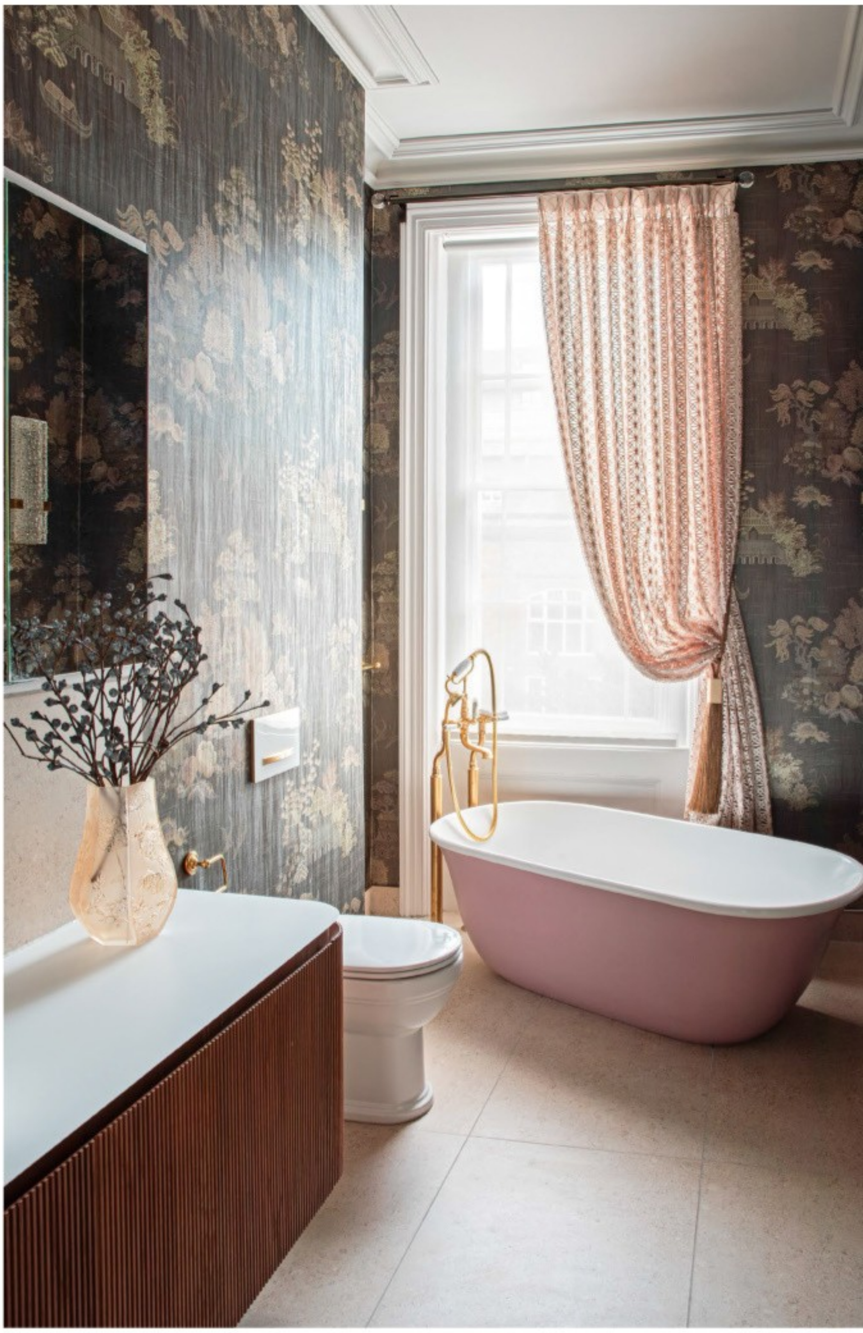


'In the sitting room, a silk fabric was used as a wallcovering – it brings texture and it also glistens in the sun'

‘I love the marshmallow tones in this
restful, cosy space – it’s definitely conducive
to getting a good night’s sleep’







MAIN BEDROOM

'I've never had a four-poster bed before and this one makes the space feel so elegant and luxurious,' says Penny. Wool wallpaper, Omexco. Headboard and bed, Charlotte James Furniture; upholstered in Skylon fabric, Jane Churchill. Bedside cabinets, Charlotte James Furniture. Curtains in Herbaria fabric, Osborne & Little. Pendant light; table lights, all Eichholtz

MAIN EN SUITE

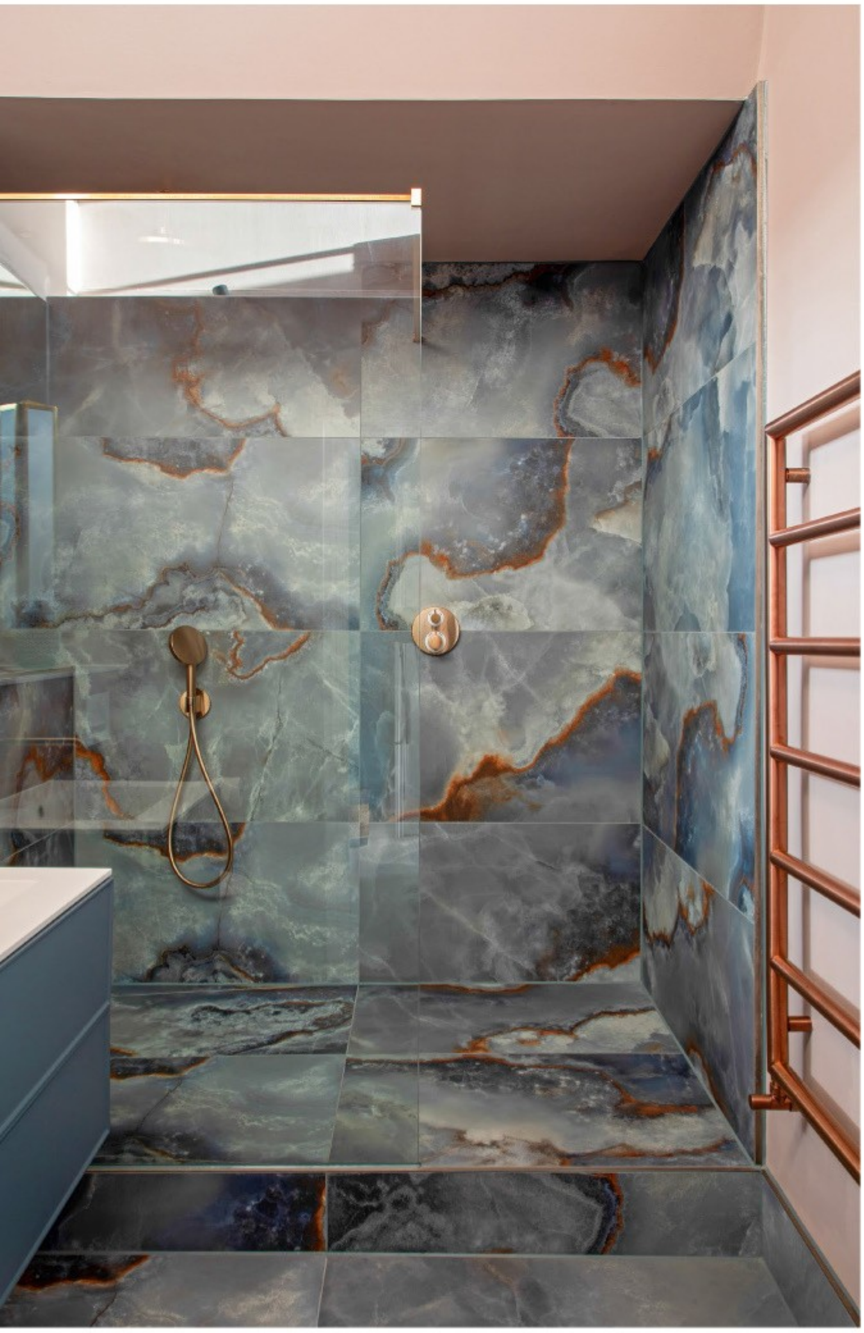
'This curtain fabric is absolutely gorgeous,' says Penny. 'It's decorative, offers privacy and enhances the feminine feel of this space.' Floating Palace wallpaper, Liberty. Bath, C.P. Hart; painted in Cinder Rose, Farrow & Ball. Curtain in Lacet fabric, Harlequin

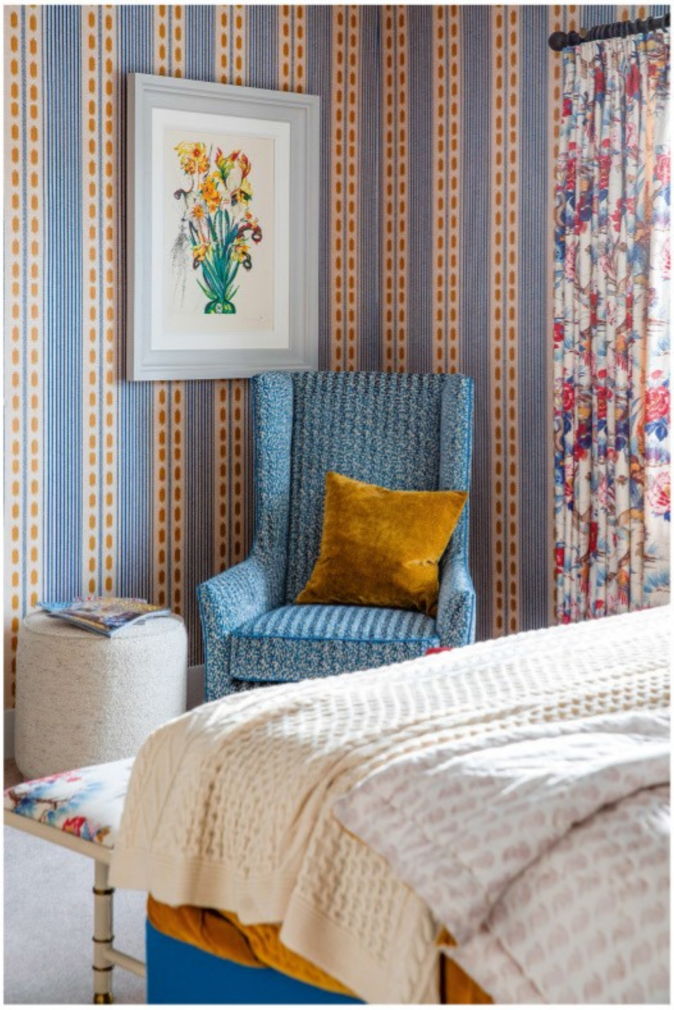
says Collette. 'Since Penny and I have known each other for a long time, and I'd designed her previous property, I was already au fait with her aesthetic.'

Having visited the house and seen the artwork that Penny had in mind for the spaces, the pair began liaising closely together about how to transform the property into a home that would be a joyful sanctuary. 'I immersed myself in the project, suggesting a raft of ideas to create the beautiful home with playful touches that Penny was after,' Collette explains.

To replace the tired kitchen, Collette recommended Blakes London, while Charlotte James Furniture was her go-to suggestion for beautiful bespoke pieces. With tried and trusted builders Luben Developments on board, work started immediately to gut the property and sensitively update it.

'Visiting Collette's studio in County Wicklow in Ireland was an amazing experience,' says Penny. 'We spent many fun hours looking at gorgeous wallpapers and fabrics from companies including James Hare. We also visited a variety of fabulous places together, such as The Design Centre,





BATHROOM
The umber tones in the tiles have been pulled through to the copper fittings in this glamorous shower room. Tiles, all Mandarin Stone. Vanity unit, C.P. Hart

BEDROOM
Inspired by the red and ginger tones in the floral curtain fabric, Collette has created an impactful space for Penny's guests. Mouassine wallpaper, Mind The Gap. Chair and curtains in fabric by Manuel Canovas. *Narcissus Telephonans Inondis* print by Salvador Dalí

Chelsea Harbour, to glean even more inspiration. 'It was wonderful to be in such experienced hands and I knew that the time and effort we'd invested in sourcing would be well worth it.'

As the renovation project came seamlessly together, Penny was able to move in just eight months later, in time to welcome family for Christmas. 'I am so grateful to Collette,' says Penny. 'She oversaw every single detail, incorporated my passion for pink in different tones and cleverly created a combination of punchy, bold spaces and more restful rooms, including the tranquil main bedroom which feels so cosseting.'

Collette adds: 'We had a lot of fun transforming this elegant old lady of a house. I remember one of Penny's friends walking in when I was there and saying that we must know each other well because all she could see was her personality. To me, that's the essence of my job. I'm thrilled that Penny is so pleased with every room. It's been a very special project.'

collettewardinteriors.ie; lubendevelopments.com

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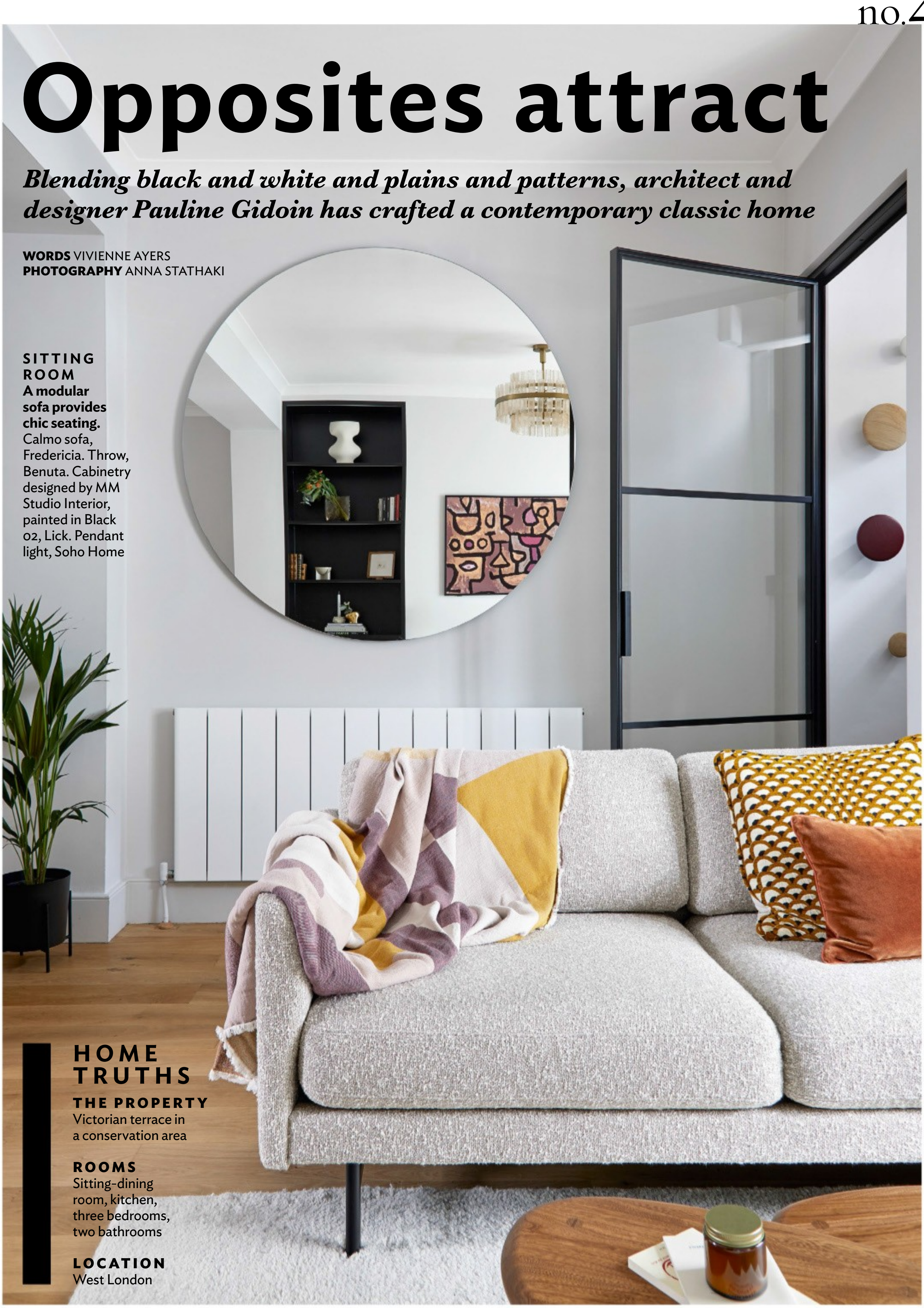
no.4

Opposites attract

Blending black and white and plains and patterns, architect and designer Pauline Gidoin has crafted a contemporary classic home

WORDS VIVIENNE AYERS
PHOTOGRAPHY ANNA STATHAKI



SITTING ROOM
A modular sofa provides chic seating. Calmo sofa, Fredericia. Throw, Benuta. Cabinetry designed by MM Studio Interior, painted in Black 02, Lick. Pendant light, Soho Home

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Victorian terrace in a conservation area

ROOMS
Sitting-dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, two bathrooms

LOCATION
West London

WHAT WAS THE BRIEF? A full house renovation from top to bottom, including changes of windows, installation of air conditioning, optimising the layout of all rooms, change of flooring, new bespoke staircase and bespoke joinery in various rooms, and full redecoration inside and outside.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE. Growing up and studying in Paris, I was deeply influenced by what I call 'the Parisian style', a blend of effortless chic and elegance. Additionally, 10 years living in Hong Kong exposed me to the challenges of limited space, which influenced my design to be extremely efficient and make sure the space is used to its best potential without compromising on style. Elegant design, maximum functionality.

WHAT WAS YOUR MAIN PRIORITY? To create an elegant, beautiful, cohesive and functional design that answered the client's needs. The family was desperately lacking storage and it was important to find smart solutions to increase storage functionality, from bespoke units to versatile furniture pieces. But also to make sure that the project ran smoothly.

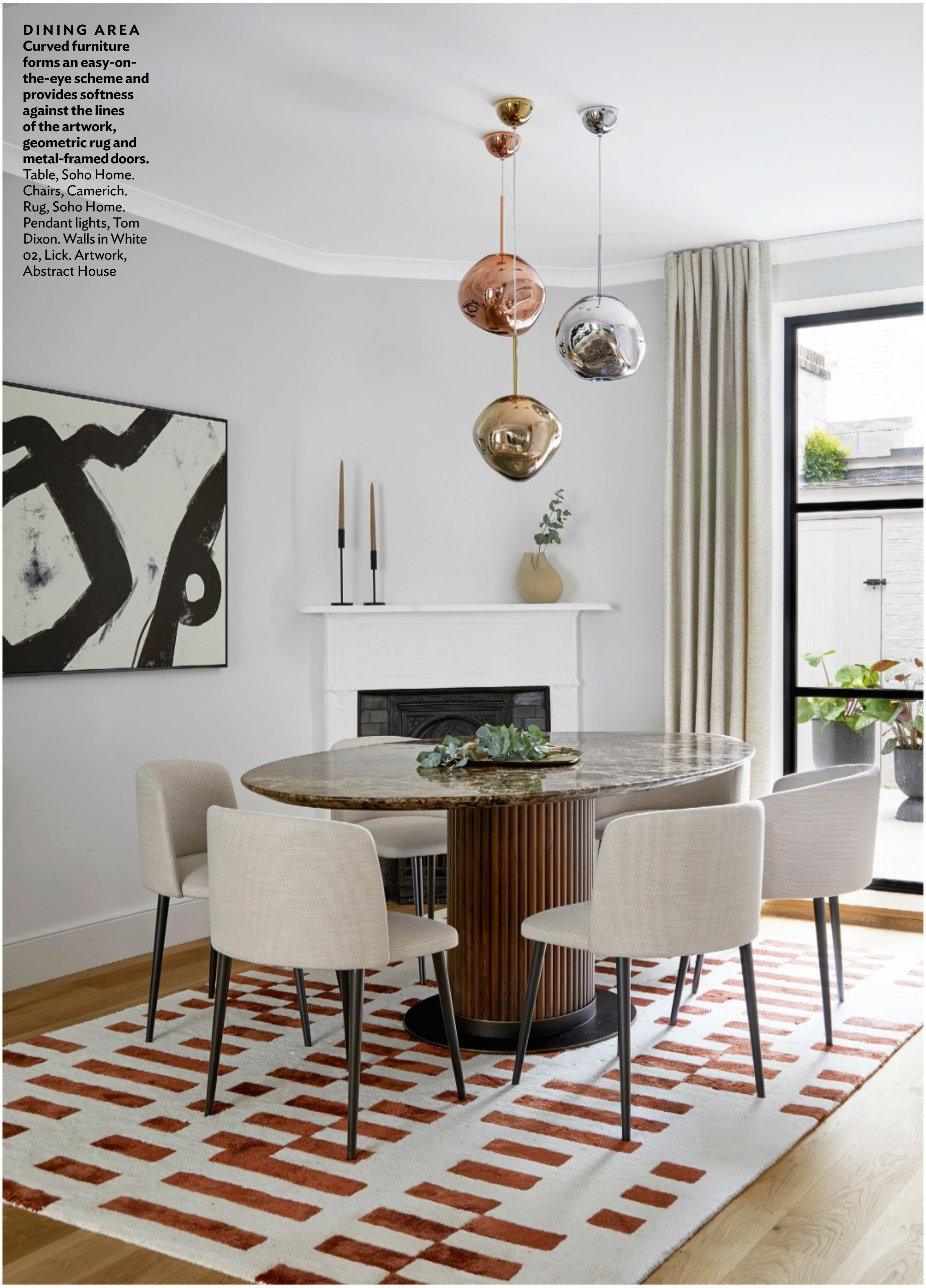
WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE SCHEME? An elegant, minimalist, modern design with contrasting elements. The simplicity of the minimalist aesthetic helps to create a calming atmosphere, making it an ideal backdrop for impactful design elements.

WHICH ROOM WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT TO THE HOMEOWNERS? Both bathrooms needed a lot of love!

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE COLOUR PALETTE? One of the important aspects for the owner was to be able to change the colour touches in her

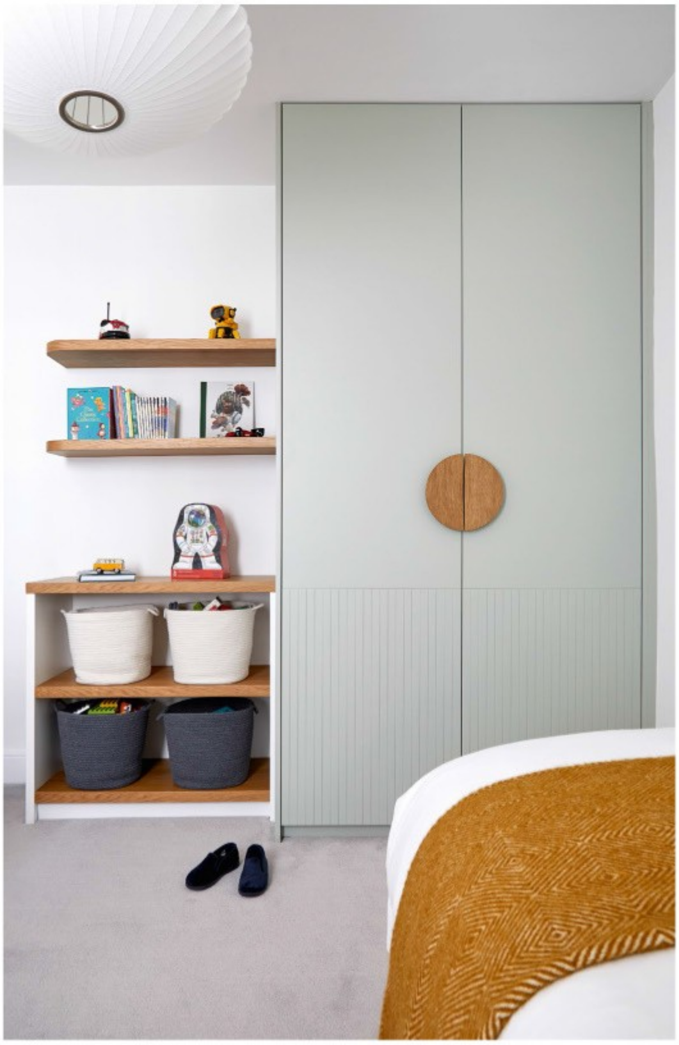
KITCHEN
Monochrome cabinetry makes for a dramatic look, with black base units grounding the scheme. Cabinetry carcasses, Howdens. Bespoke cabinet fronts made and spray painted by kitchenspray.com; painted in David Rose and Modest, Coat. Blinds, Blinds 2go. Quartz worktop quartz, Planet Marble

SITTING ROOM
The artwork above the fireplace is a picture frame TV, ensuring a stylish look when it isn't on. Coffee tables, Ercol. Rug, Roche Bobois



DINING AREA

Curved furniture forms an easy-on-the-eye scheme and provides softness against the lines of the artwork, geometric rug and metal-framed doors. Table, Soho Home. Chairs, Camerich. Rug, Soho Home. Pendant lights, Tom Dixon. Walls in White 02, Lick. Artwork, Abstract House



> ‘It was important to find smart solutions to increase the storage space, from bespoke units to versatile furniture pieces’

SON’S BEDROOM **A stylish built-in wardrobe and shelving unit ensure everything can be tidied away.** Bed, Loaf. Throw, Toast. Cabinet in Yard Party, Coat

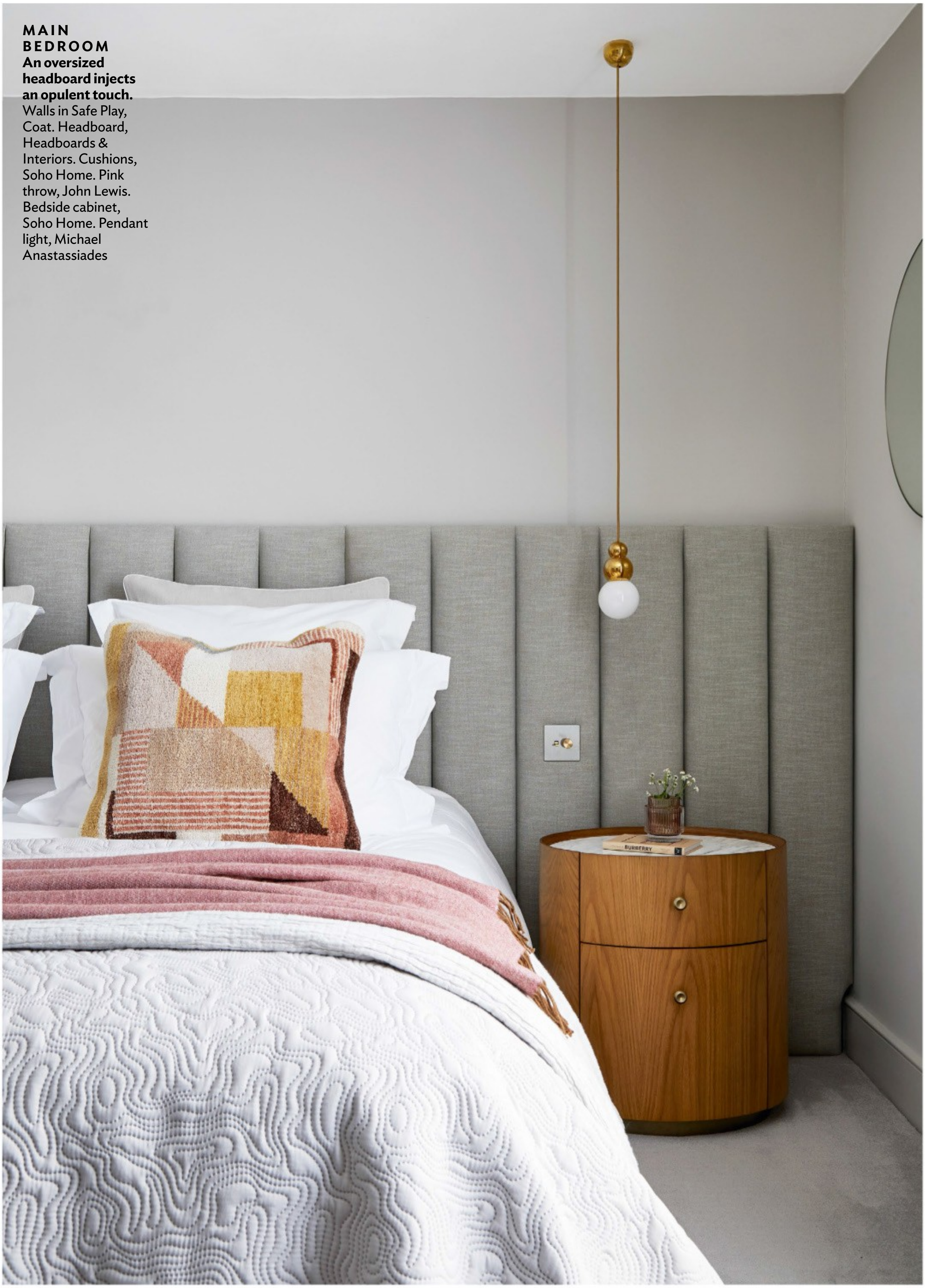
DAUGHTER’S BEDROOM **Pauline created a stylish study area along one wall.** Desk, Daals. Chair, Ikea

MAIN BATHROOM **Black accents contrast against the neutral tiles.** Dreamwell White and Dreamwell Gypsum Matt 60/60 tiles, Minoli

house during the year. Therefore we opted for a neutral and soft palette for the permanent items of the scheme – sofa, dining chairs, curtains, headboards – but played with texture – boucle, weaves, shiny, matt – to bring depth. We created contrast by incorporating deep black for the alcove joinery and the kitchen. We then opted to add colour touches with the accessories that will allow the owner to change the accent colours when she feels like a change.

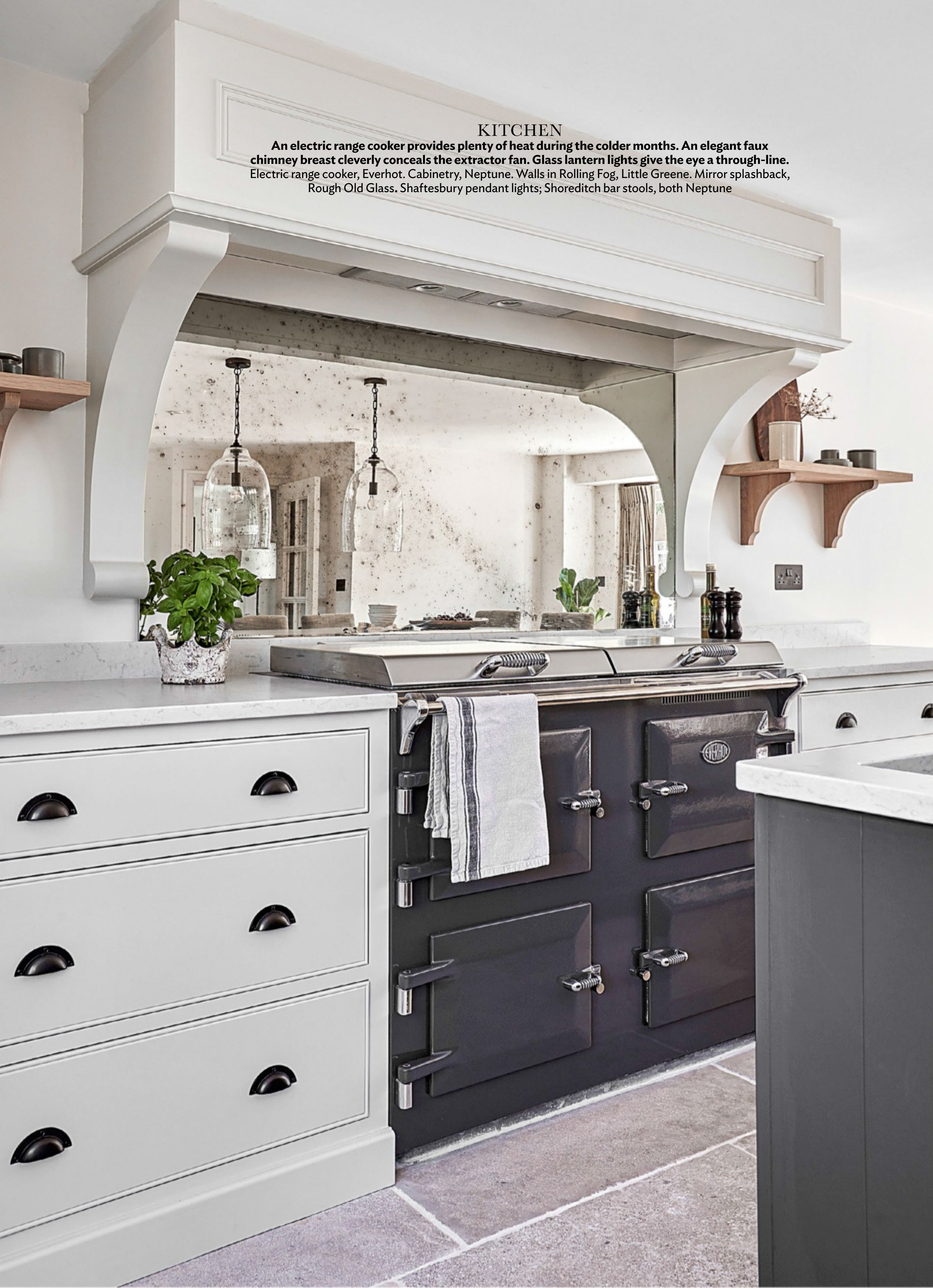
WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL SCHEME? In a full-house refurbishment, it is easy to get lost in the endless inspiration images of Instagram or Pinterest. To create a successful scheme, it is important to be coherent from the entrance of the space to the last room. A good tip is to create a mood board for each room and make sure that all the mood boards work together. Those will be your guideline to develop your design. The other key aspect to a successful scheme is to start with the spatial layout. This is the first step for any design. The spatial layout must be properly thought out for the needs of the user but also be functional. A beautiful space that is not functional is not a good design.

mmstudiointerior.com



MAIN BEDROOM

An oversized headboard injects an opulent touch. Walls in Safe Play, Coat. Headboard, Headboards & Interiors. Cushions, Soho Home. Pink throw, John Lewis. Bedside cabinet, Soho Home. Pendant light, Michael Anastassiades



KITCHEN

An electric range cooker provides plenty of heat during the colder months. An elegant faux chimney breast cleverly conceals the extractor fan. Glass lantern lights give the eye a through-line. Electric range cooker, Everhot. Cabinetry, Neptune. Walls in Rolling Fog, Little Greene. Mirror splashback, Rough Old Glass. Shaftesbury pendant lights; Shoreditch bar stools, both Neptune no. 5

TO THE RESCUE

Trees creeping in the back doors and plants growing in the bath didn't stop Kate and James Thompson from taking on this former carriage workshop

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
A former carriage workshop

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen, utility room, study, cloakroom, cinema room, four bedrooms, three bathrooms

LOCATION Buckinghamshire

WORDS JULIET BENNING | **PHOTOGRAPHY** SARAH GRIGGS

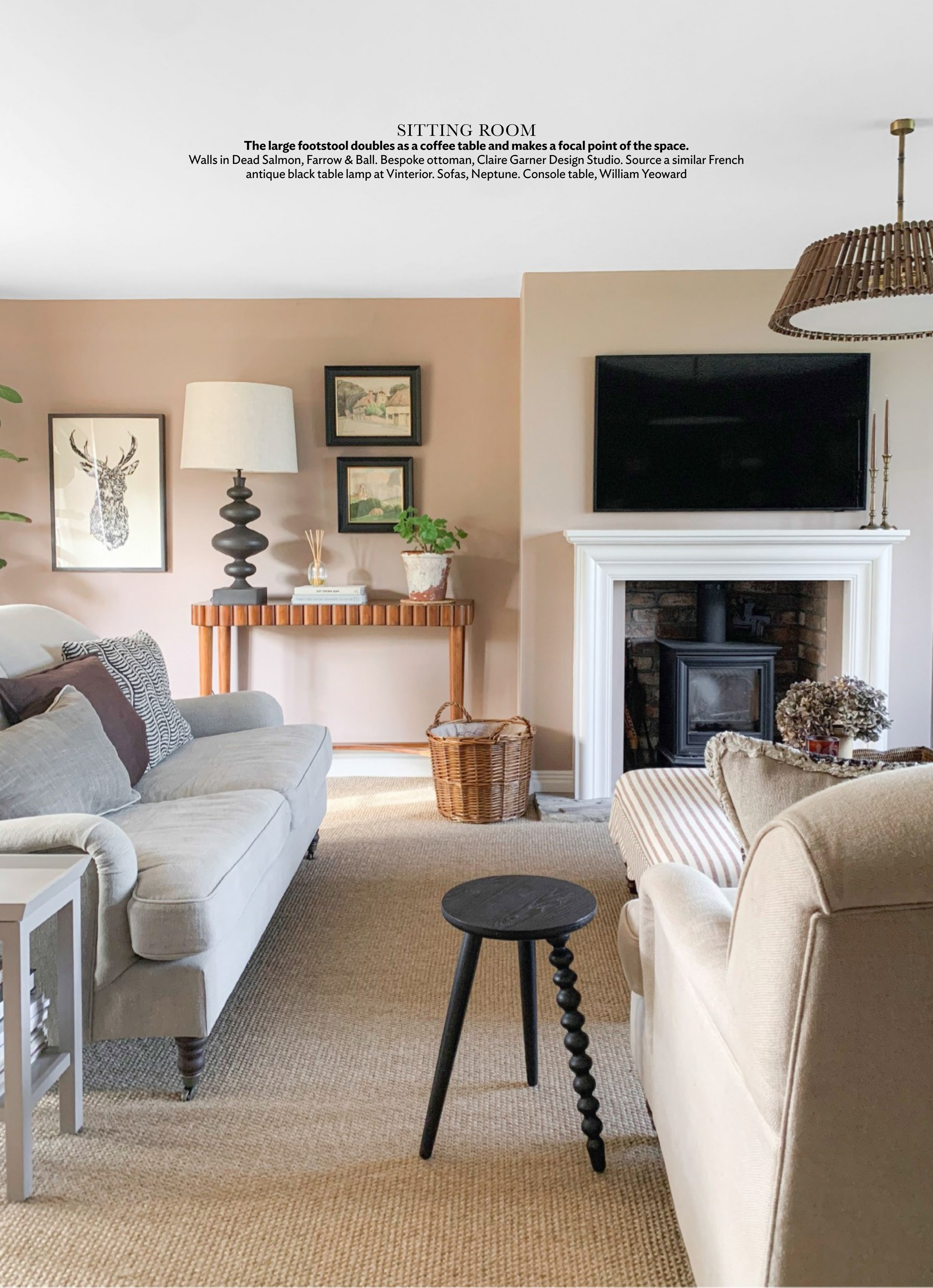
Kate and James Thompson's new home had so much kerb appeal that Kate knew she wanted it even before the pair had crossed the threshold. 'It was one Saturday afternoon that the email from the estate agent pinged up with the photos of the property. I instantly fell in love with it and called them on the spot,' says Kate.

'At the time we were living in a renovated cottage, a mere three miles down the road, but we felt we were outgrowing it and also wanted a bigger garden,' Kate explains. Upon viewing, the couple found that while the exterior was everything that they had hoped for, the interior was virtually derelict.

'The house had originally been part of an estate and we believe it was once two separate workshop buildings used to fix the carriages,' explains Kate. The property hadn't been touched inside for 30 years and as an elderly lady lived there with her carers living there, too, there were bedrooms on the ground floor. 'Everything needed to be ripped out and there

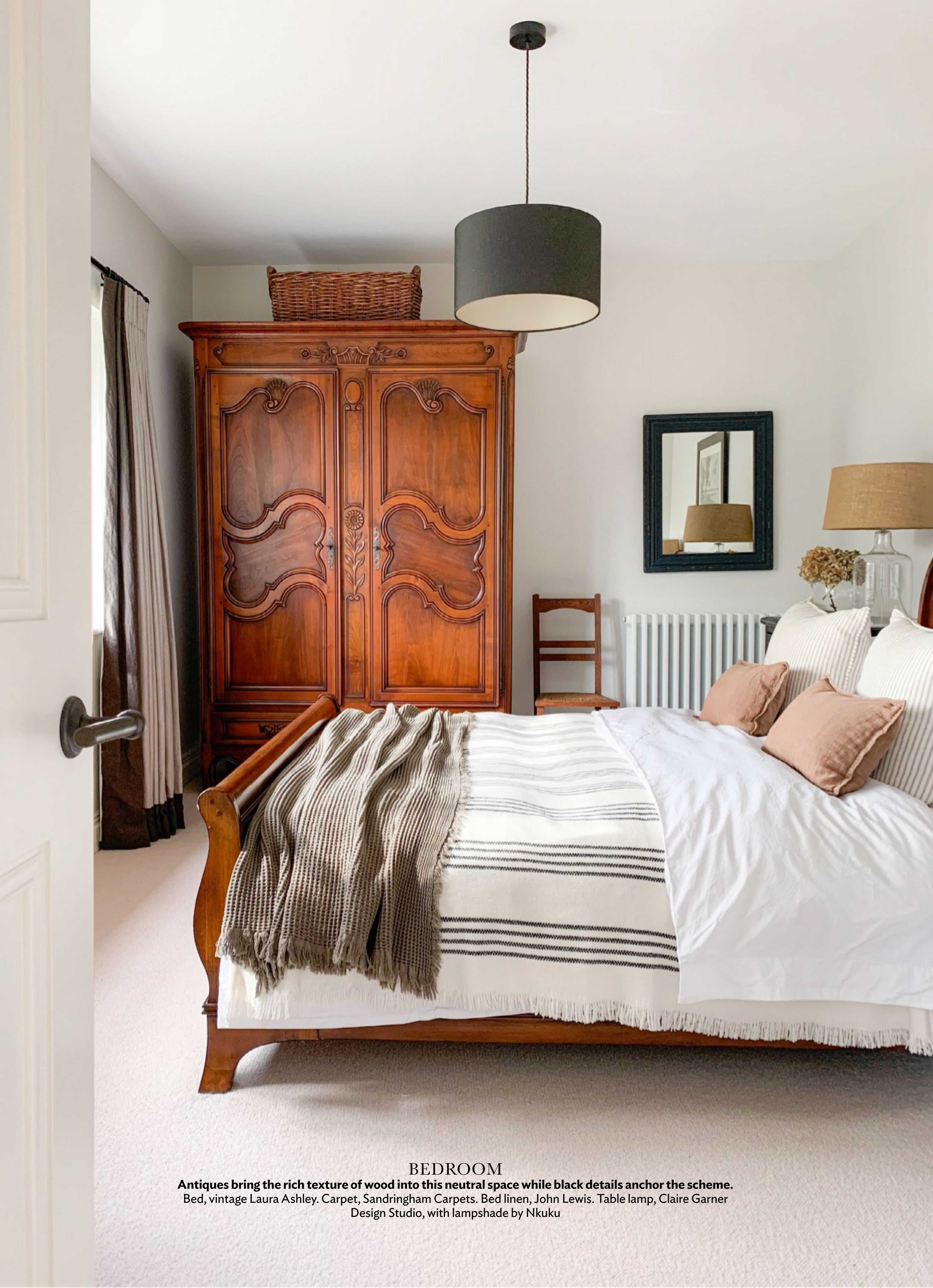
HALLWAY

Tumbled limestone flagstone tiles have been laid throughout the ground floor, adding period character.
Bayonne Provence limestone floor tiles, Mandarin Stone. Bobbin bench, Claire Garner Design Studio. Rug and artwork, Etsy. Frinky floor lamp, Pooky



SITTING ROOM

The large footstool doubles as a coffee table and makes a focal point of the space. Walls in Dead Salmon, Farrow & Ball. Bespoke ottoman, Claire Garner Design Studio. Source a similar French antique black table lamp at Vinterior. Sofas, Neptune. Console table, William Yeoward



BEDROOM

Antiques bring the rich texture of wood into this neutral space while black details anchor the scheme.
Bed, vintage Laura Ashley. Carpet, Sandringham Carpets. Bed linen, John Lewis. Table lamp, Claire Garner Design Studio, with lampshade by Nkuku

were trees creeping in through the back doors and plants growing in the bath tub,' says Kate. 'I never expected James to be enthusiastic about a house that needed so much work but he was more excited than I was.'

It was at their second viewing that the pair realised they had competition. 'There was plenty of interest, mainly from developers,' says Kate. 'The sale went to sealed bids but we wrote to the sellers and told them how much we loved the house and that we were a family with two teenagers at school close by.' The prospect of having a new family in the house appealed to the sellers and Kate and James won the bid.

With such a lot of work to be done, the family, along with their springer spaniel, rented

'We changed very little at the front of the house as we are in a conservation area'

LANDING

A neutral palette and simple blinds ensure that Kate's antique furnishings draw focus.

Existing armchair reupholstered in Oswin fabric in Charcoal, Romo. Blinds in Doyu Stucco fabric, Villa Nova. Mini bracket wall light in bronze, Hector Finch, with lampshade, Jim Lawrence another property nearby for six months. During this time Kate enlisted Claire Garner Design Studio who provided interior design advice and also recommended a reliable builder they had worked with previously.

'We started by stripping out all the walls from the first floor but we changed very little at the front of the house as it's in a conservation area, although we did receive planning permission to change the front porch,' explains Kate. 'We also decided to add a full second floor where there had been a mezzanine level, we repositioned the windows, changed the floor plan and renewed all the wiring and plumbing.'

A pale grey kitchen provided much of the ground floor palette while tumbled limestone flags throughout add authentic period character. In the sitting room, deep pink walls bring a warm feel, in addition to the new log burner. 'I'm not into bold colours, so mostly I wanted it to be light, bright and neutral,' says Kate. Tackling the garden is next, but for now, the family are enjoying the fruits of their labour. ㉕

clairegarner.com

BATHROOM

Twin wall lights add a luxurious note while the vanity unit provides plenty of storage.
Walls in All White, Farrow & Ball. Chichester vanity unit, Neptune. Blind in fabric in Smoke, Warwick. Brunswick wall light, Neptune. Basket, Claire Garner Design Studio

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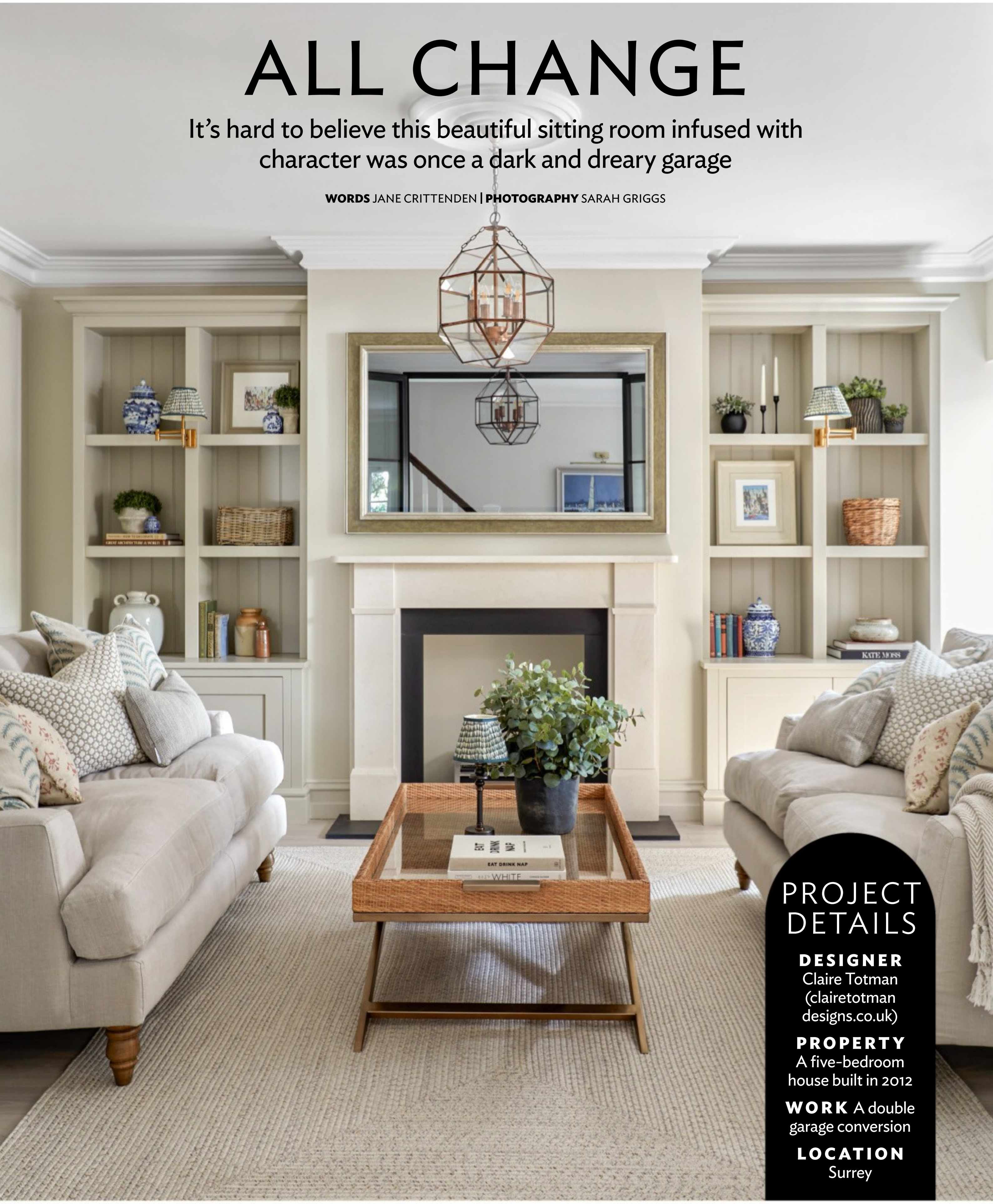
ALL CHANGE

It's hard to believe this beautiful sitting room infused with character was once a dark and dreary garage

WORDS JANE CRITTENDEN | **PHOTOGRAPHY** SARAH GRIGGS



PROJECT DETAILS

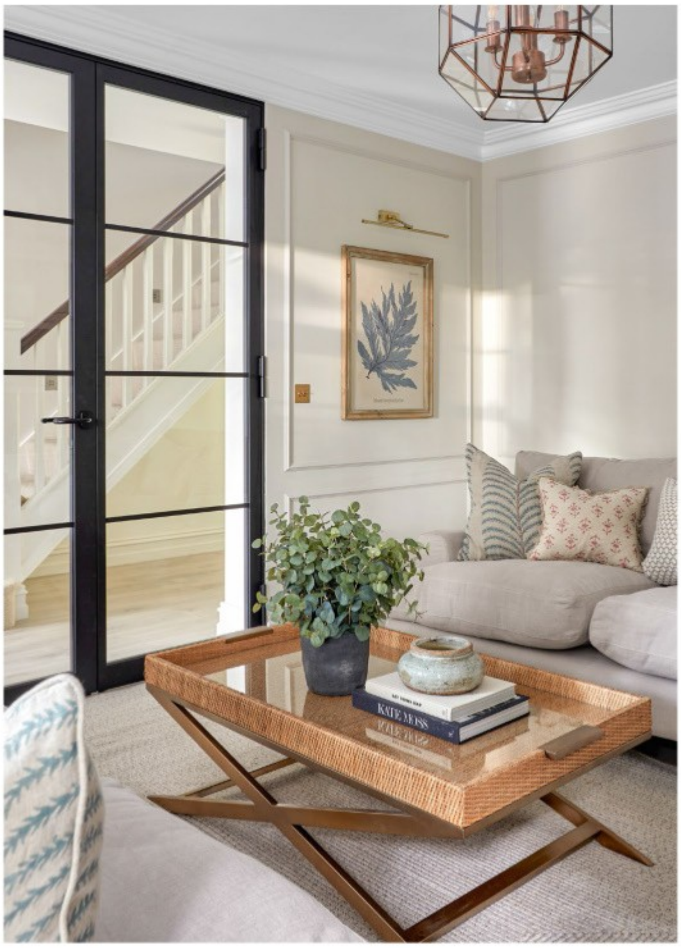
DESIGNER Claire Totman (clairetotmandesigns.co.uk)

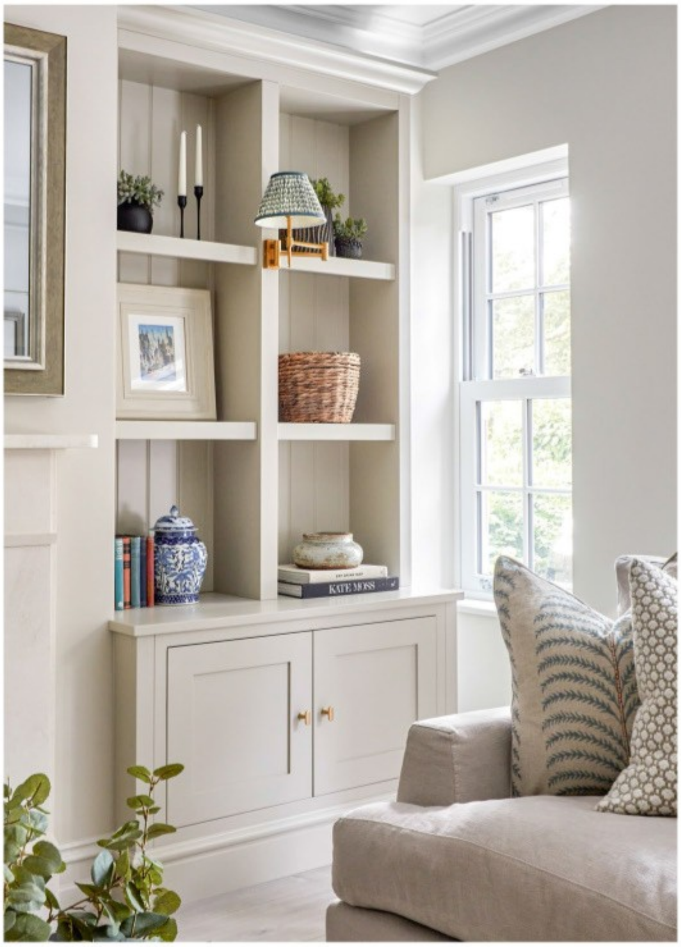
PROPERTY A five-bedroom house built in 2012

WORK A double garage conversion

LOCATION Surrey

no.6





Louise and Ben bought a new build in 2012 and, having made no changes in 12 years, they wanted to refresh rooms with the help of Claire Totman. 'I saw scope in the integral double garage,' she says. 'We went on to convert this space into their new sitting room.'

1 SPACE PLANNING

Louise and Ben used the 30sq m double garage for sports storage. Claire suggested relocating the equipment to a new lock-up along the side of the house. 'It meant we could absorb the original living room into the new kitchen-diner at the back and relocate the formal sitting room to here at the front,' she says. 'The house benefits from a double-fronted look too.'

2 CHARACTER BUILDING

The couple brought Claire on board for her classic design approach. The sitting room was fitted with a faux chimney breast and fireplace with period features, including wall panelling. The old single door became double floor-to-ceiling glazed doors. 'We believe in getting the bones of a room right before we bring in the furniture,' says Claire.

3 DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Windows replaced the two garage doors but since the floor space was split into three, the sitting room shares a window with the adjoining plant room. 'Bespoke shelving had to work around the window position,' says Claire. 'There wasn't room for a TV so it's mounted on the chimney breast but looks like a mirror when it's switched off.'

4 DECORATING DETAILS

Warm neutrals set the tone for the quiet retreat away from the busy open-plan kitchen. Sofas are sized to work with the opening double doors and step in for a cosy fireside feel. Wall lighting fixed to the shelves have timeless appeal while the glass chandelier makes an elegant statement. 'The sitting room makes a strong focal point as you come into the house now,' says Claire. 'The project has been transformative.'

A CALMING INFLUENCE

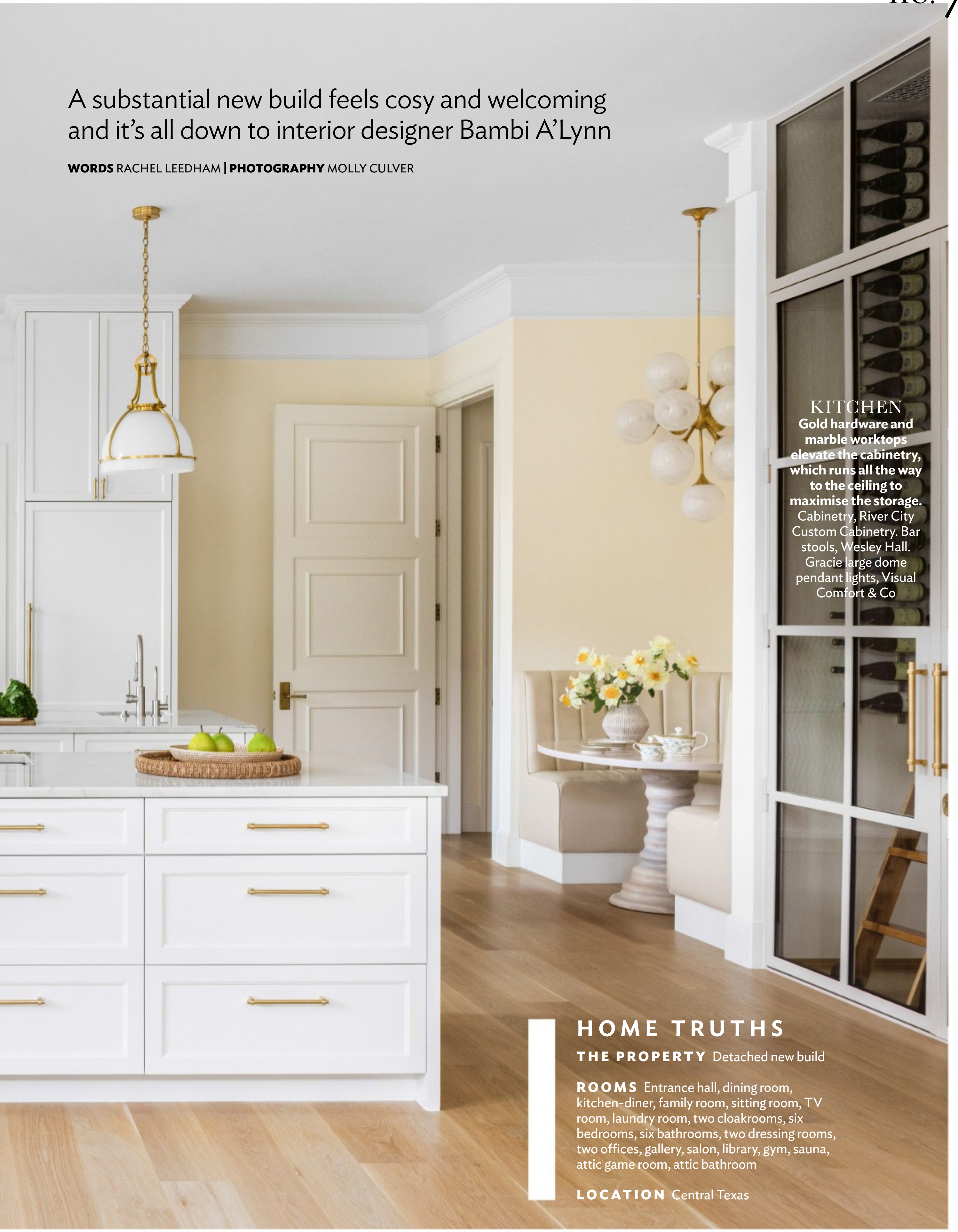
The formal front sitting room is a tranquil spot away from the hubbub of family life where a whole new feature wall adds character to the former garage space. 'Colour drenching down over the skirting adds height to the room,' says Claire. **Walls** and **woodwork in** Slaked Lime Deep; **shelving in** Slaked Lime Dark, both Little Greene. **Ceiling in** All White, Farrow & Ball. Bluebell **sofa** in Chantilly is similar, Sofa.com. Sovannah **coffee table**; Areca **cushion cover** in Seafoam; set of four Seaweed **prints** in Blue, all Oka. Cagney **wall lights**; Apollo **lantern**, all Pooky. **MirrorTV**, PictureFrame.TV

Grand designs

no.7

A substantial new build feels cosy and welcoming and it's all down to interior designer Bambi A'Lynn

WORDS RACHEL LEEDHAM | **PHOTOGRAPHY** MOLLY CULVER



KITCHEN **Gold hardware and marble worktops elevate the cabinetry, which runs all the way to the ceiling to maximise the storage.** Cabinetry, River City Custom Cabinetry. Bar stools, Wesley Hall. Gracie large dome pendant lights, Visual Comfort & Co

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Detached new build

ROOMS Entrance hall, dining room, kitchen-diner, family room, sitting room, TV room, laundry room, two cloakrooms, six bedrooms, six bathrooms, two dressing rooms, two offices, gallery, salon, library, gym, sauna, attic game room, attic bathroom

LOCATION Central Texas

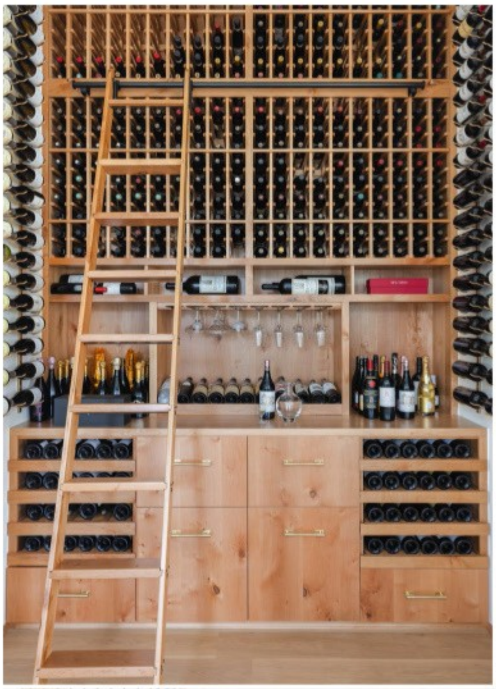
HOW DID YOU COME TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT? I work as a team with Watermark Homes by David Bratton, which was awarded the project to design this large family home for the clients and their two young daughters. I was originally involved with the fixtures and fittings, however, about six months into the project, I was asked to specify all of the furnishings as well.

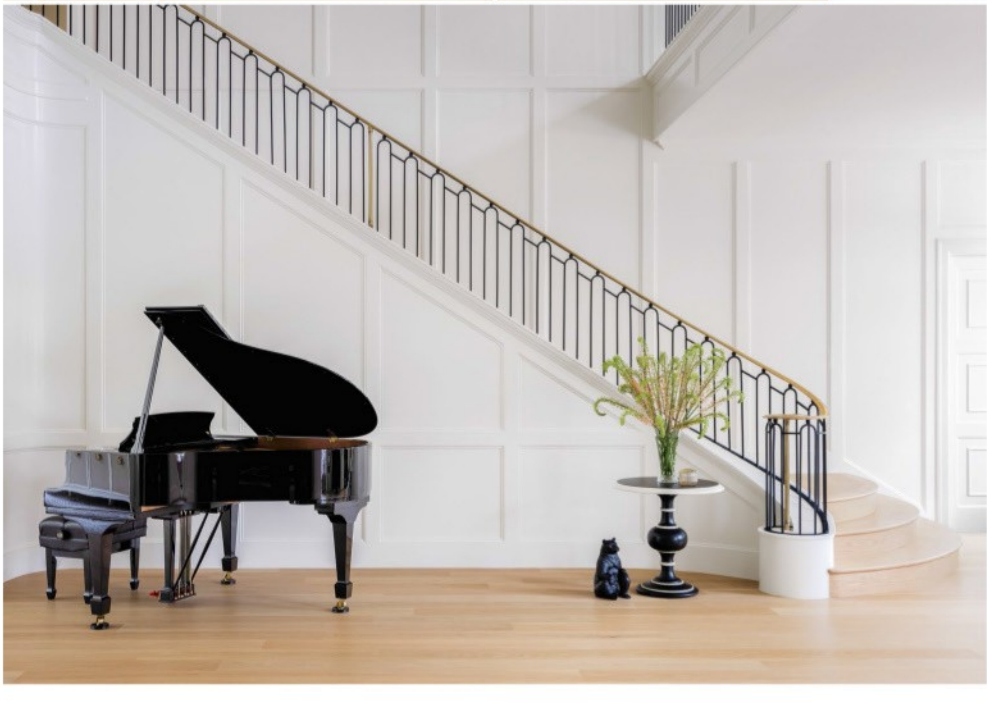
HOW INVOLVED WERE THE HOMEOWNERS? They were very involved; she and I visited the Dallas Design District together a number of times, dedicating a day to choosing upholstery, another to looking at lighting, and so on. This way she was able to view a lot of the pieces in person.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE CLIENTS' STYLE? They like traditional interiors but with a fresh, slightly modern twist. They love uncluttered rooms and prefer a calming colour palette.

WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST PRIORITIES FOR THE HOMEOWNERS? Because the owners have young children, they wanted a home that would be easy to maintain, so I have included a lot of leather upholstery and even some vinyl. Much of the furniture has a catalysed finish – a varnishing process that seals and protects it – in order to ensure that the pieces won't become scuffed and damaged.

WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE SCHEMES? I gave the client stacks of design





WINE CELLAR
A chic ladder is a useful addition here.
Joinery, Watermark Homes by David Bratton

BREAKFAST
Still life paintings add a shot of colour.
Amelia dining table, Doorman. Cristol large tiered chandelier, Visual Comfort & Co

ENTRANCE
Black elements provide graphic contrasts to the white panelled walls.
Black Beauty side table, Bunny Williams Home. Architecture, Watermark Homes by David Bratton

DINING ROOM
Murano chandeliers bring grandeur to this more formal space.
Chandeliers, Sourced by Janet Wiebe. Dining chairs, Louis J Solomon. Becker rug in Opal, Stark Carpet. Pure Poppy wallpaper, Morris & Co

STUDY
The pretty botanical sofa fabric inspired this uplifting scheme.
Sofa, Fairfield; in Botanica Indoor/Outdoor in Multi; curtain trim in Ashoka tape in Magenta & Leaf, both Schumacher. Sarafina chandelier, Coleen & Company

SITTING ROOM
A sense of symmetry lends elegance to this beautiful space.
Inga sofas, O Henry House. Leia armchairs, Wesley Hall. Elite wall lights, Paul Ferrante. Mirrors, Ebanista

books to peruse, so that she could tag the rooms she particularly liked. Together with her Instagram choices, this really helped me to build a picture of what she loved.

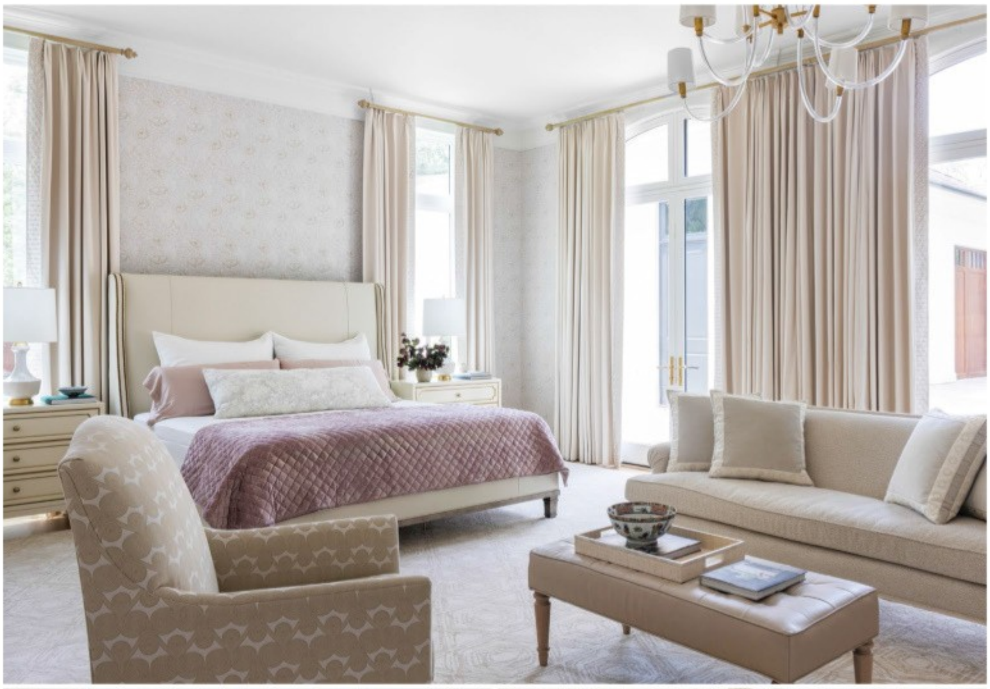
HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE COLOUR PALETTE? The owners prefer neutrals, so we just added a hint of colour in each room such as blacks and golds in the sitting room and muted pinks in the family room. For the cloakrooms, the girls' bedrooms and the owner's study, we were a bit braver with colour and pattern, which was fun.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE? Both my clients grew up surrounded by European antiques but they didn't want any antiques in their own home, so it was a question of sourcing reproductions that make the home look lived in and curated. I have a very good furniture maker who made the classic dining table, for example, and I sourced new Murano glass chandeliers that look like antique ones.

WHAT WAS THE MOST SATISFYING ASPECT OF THIS PROJECT? Installation days are always the best: watching it come together layer by layer: window coverings, rugs, furnishings, lamps and accessories.

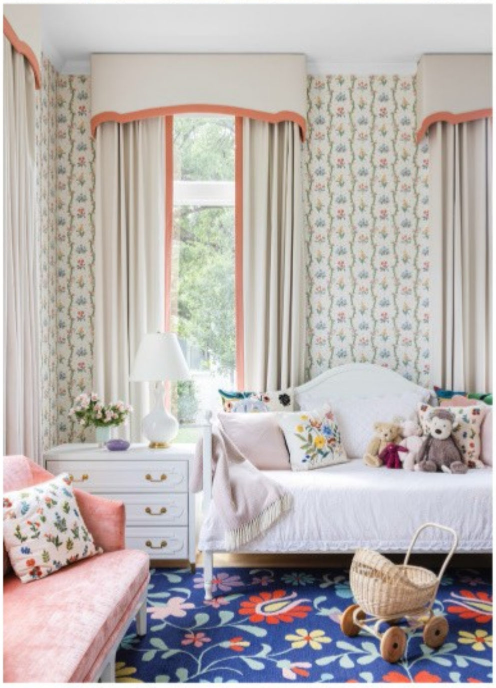
WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL SCHEME? Start with a hero fabric or rug or piece of art and from there develop the colours in the space, selecting fabrics in various textures and making sure to mix the scale and type of patterns. ㉕

bambialynn.com



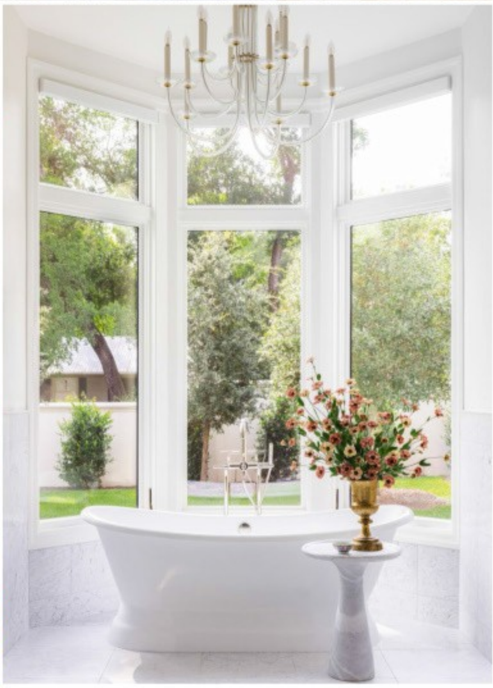
MAIN BEDROOM

Pretty patterns add interest to the subtle colour palette. Chrysanthemum Toile wallpaper, Morris & Co. Iris bed, Wesley Hall. Vivian large two-tier chandelier; Luisa large table lamp, both Visual Comfort & Co. Rug, Kravet



DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM

With its dark background and punchy colours, the rug is both practical and fun. NP-20 Navy rug, Momeni. Lucy wallpaper, Lulie Wallace. Addison table lamp, Visual Comfort & Co



BATHROOM

The free-standing tub is positioned to enjoy views of the garden. Elwick bath, Victoria + Albert. Wharton chandelier, Visual Comfort & Co. The Monet table by Lusso is a good alternative

no.8

Bigger picture

After extending their home, Louise and Graham Foxton can now enjoy uninterrupted views over rolling fields and have space for everyone

WORDS KAREN WILSON | **PHOTOGRAPHY** KATIE LEE

HOME TRUTHS

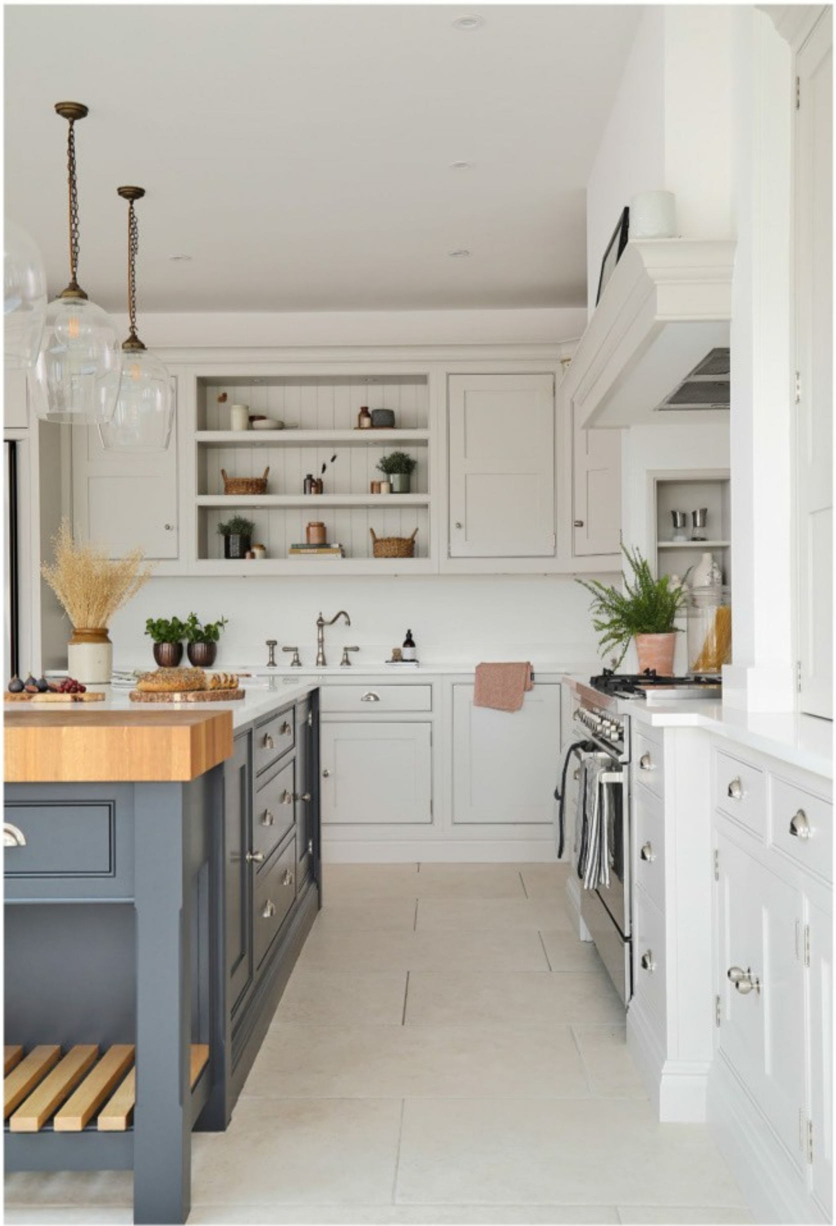
THE PROPERTY
Detached Edwardian house

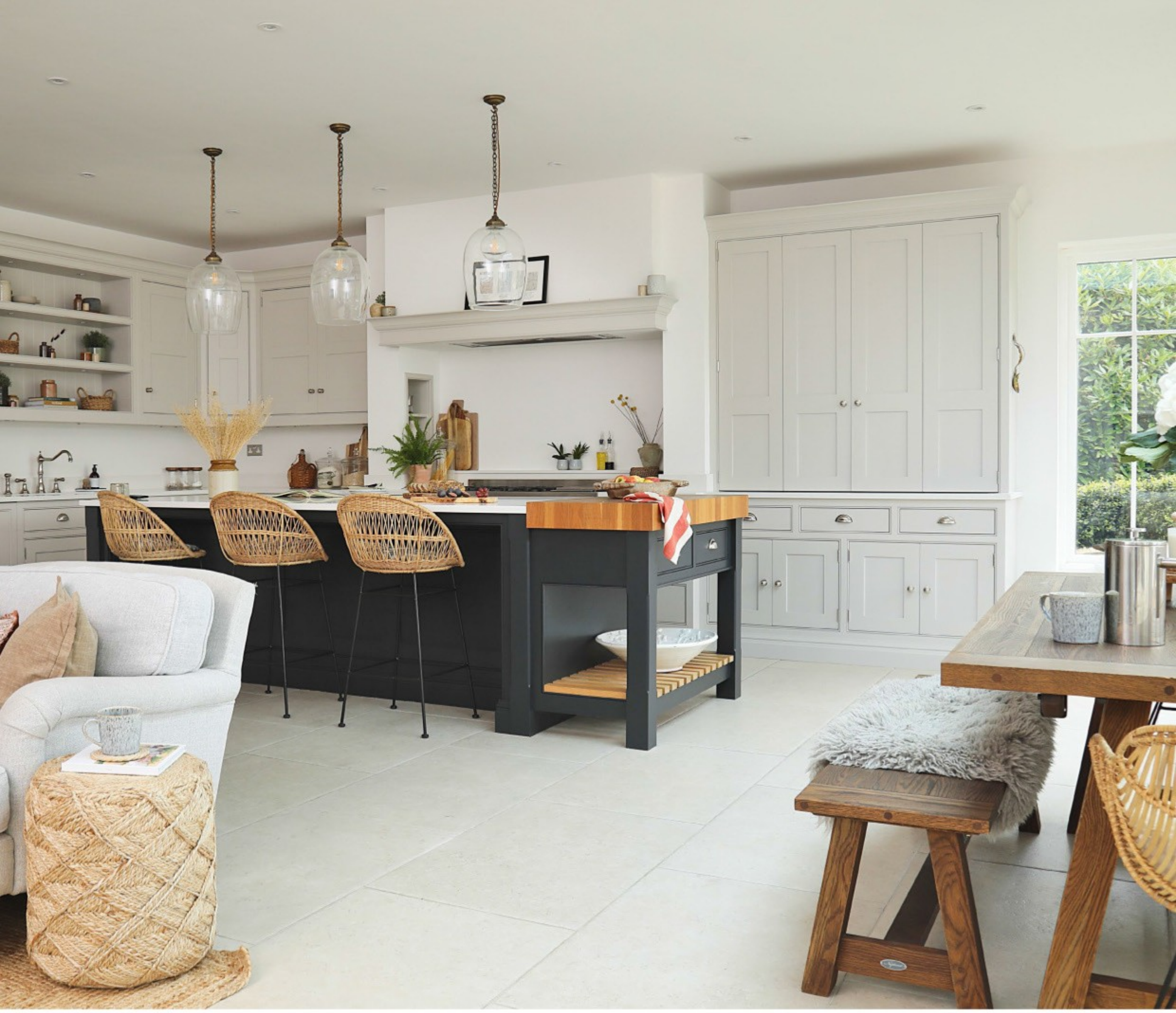
ROOMS
Kitchen-diner/family room, sitting room, playroom, office, utility room, cloakroom, boot room, four bedrooms, two bathrooms

LOCATION
Leeds

DINING AREA **'I quite liked the idea of having a different colour wood for the extending table, and the bench is so handy with children,' says Louise. 'It's functional as well as pretty.'** Arundel oak extending dining table and bench; Shoreditch dining chairs, all Neptune. Chevron flat rattan dining chairs, Cox & Cox, are similar

KITCHEN-DINER **'The porcelain floor tiles have a tumbled effect, so look like limestone but are more durable,' says Louise. 'The butcher's block softens the look of the island as it adds an extra natural material.' Open shelves provide visual appeal and break up the run of wall units.** Ramon Buff porcelain floor tiles, Mandarin Stone. Wooden tray on legs (on table), Homesense. Faux sheepskin (on bench), John Lewis. Kitchen units in Tansy; island in Nightshade, Tom Howley. Walls in Slaked Lime; woodwork in Slaked Lime Mid, Little Greene. Range cooker, Bertazzoni. Walcot pendant lights, Jim Lawrence. Try Artificial forest fern, Blooming Artificial. Sink, Kohler. Provence widespread sink mixer tap with rinse, Perrin & Rowe. Baskets (on shelves), Zara Home





Many boxes were ticked when Louise and Graham Foxton viewed their Edwardian house near Leeds in 2018 – in a pretty village location, good schools on the doorstep, high ceilings and a rear outlook over fields – but it wasn't until a second viewing with the owner that they fully pictured themselves living there.

'It felt completely different to walking around with an estate agent,' says Louise, an actuary. 'The owner had brought up three children there and could tell us more about it. Suddenly it felt more like a home.'

After finding a buyer for their 1950s home in a nearby village and consulting builders and planners to ensure their renovation ideas were feasible, the pair felt quite confident they could fix the property's shortcomings. 'There was no direct access to the garden and you had to go through the kitchen to reach the living room,' explains Louise. 'However, by knocking down the single-storey extension and conservatory, then building a two-storey extension, we knew we could replicate the open-plan feel we loved in our previous home.'

Following a five-month building project, the family can now enjoy an open-plan kitchen-diner and family room, which leads to a new patio dug into the upward sloping garden. The previous kitchen is now

'THE OPEN-PLAN LAYOUT IS MUCH EASIER FOR FAMILY LIFE AS WE CAN DO THINGS SEPARATELY BUT STILL BE TOGETHER'

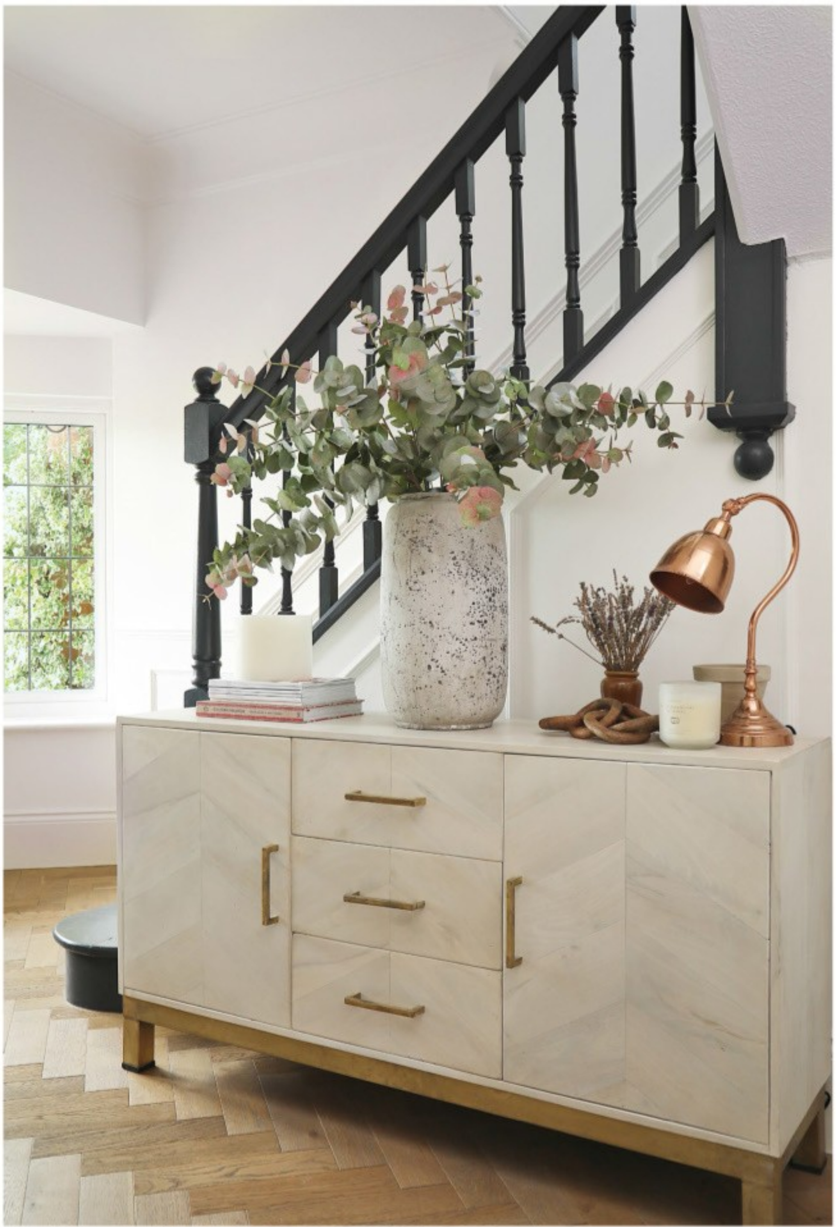
split into a utility, cloakroom and hall/boot room, while the former dining room has become a playroom for the couple's children, Ava, seven, Etta, five, and Ford, three. A highlight is the luxurious main bedroom suite with dramatic apex window and indulgent walk through dressing room. 'We really wanted to capture the views and the vaulted ceiling gave us the opportunity to do it,' says Louise.

Unfortunately there were unexpected costs when the builders unearthed a bomb shelter and inadequate foundations to the property's previous single-storey extension. Returning from holiday mid-build to find holes in the upstairs floors was another testing time. 'It was horrendous,' remembers Louise. 'The only room not touched was the nursery, and that was full of dust, so we moved in with Graham's dad and stepmum for nine weeks.'

In the following years Louise has revisited each room, creating mood boards to hone the decor with a relaxed, earthy and timeless look throughout. 'As there was a lot of decision fatigue, I found it easier to consider finishing touches on an individual room basis later on,' she recalls.

Wall colours in particular were tricky to perfect. Farrow & Ball's Strong White wasn't quite right for the kitchen but it was the perfect shade for the

'WE CHOSE GEORGIAN BAR-STYLE WINDOWS FOR THE REAR EXTENSION TO MAKE IT LOOK A BIT MORE UNIQUE'

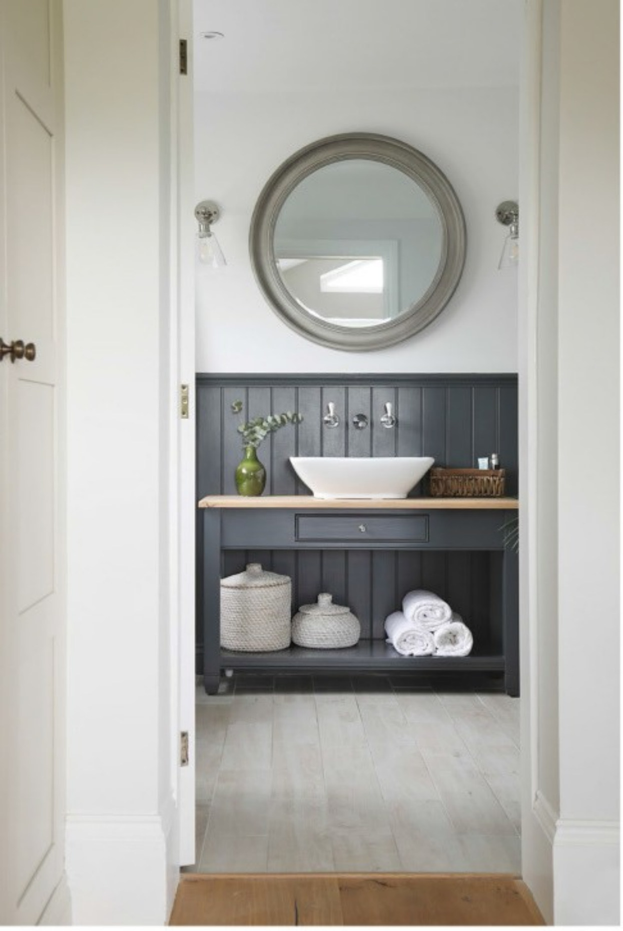


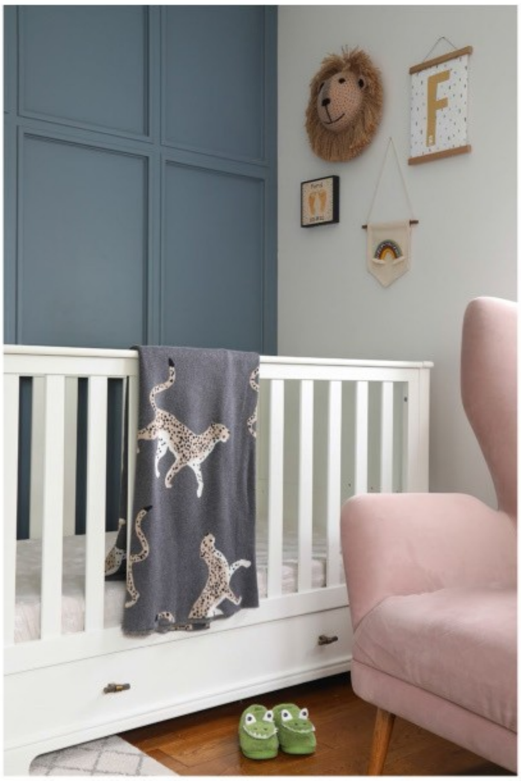
SITTING ROOM

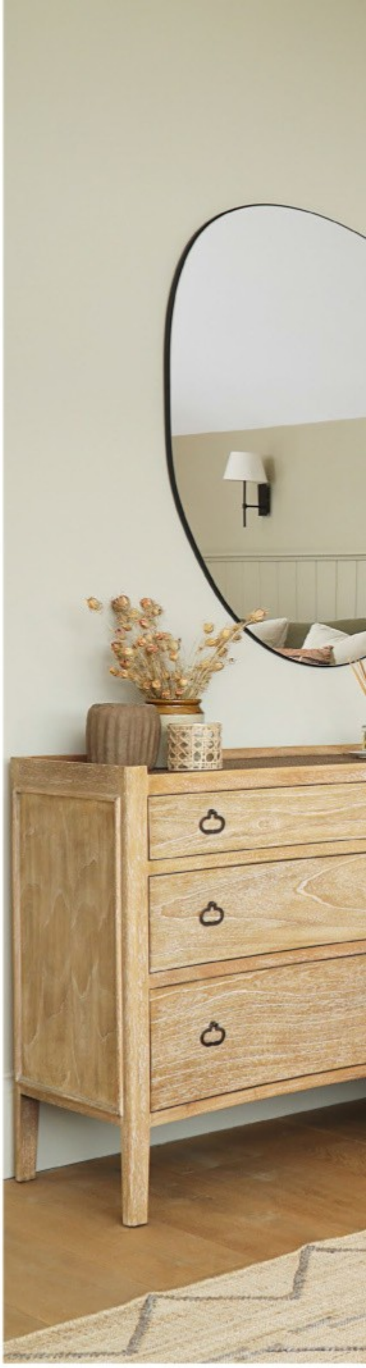
'This space gets used more in winter when we can light a fire and watch a film together,' says Louise. 'The boat pictures were passed down from my late dad and the other artwork is from Graham's late grandma. They elevate the room as it feels more personal. The drawing of an old man was by my granddad, so it's nice to have something to remember him by.' Eva sofa and Arthur footstool, Neptune. Hazel cushion cover (on sofa), House & Habitat. Walls in Strong White, Farrow & Ball. Bayford set of two woven trays, Garden Trading, is an alternative. Massin large vase (on fireplace), Abigail Ahern. Liang & Eimil Adlon side table, Sweetpea & Willow, is similar. Smith Stripe cushion cover, House & Habitat, is a good match

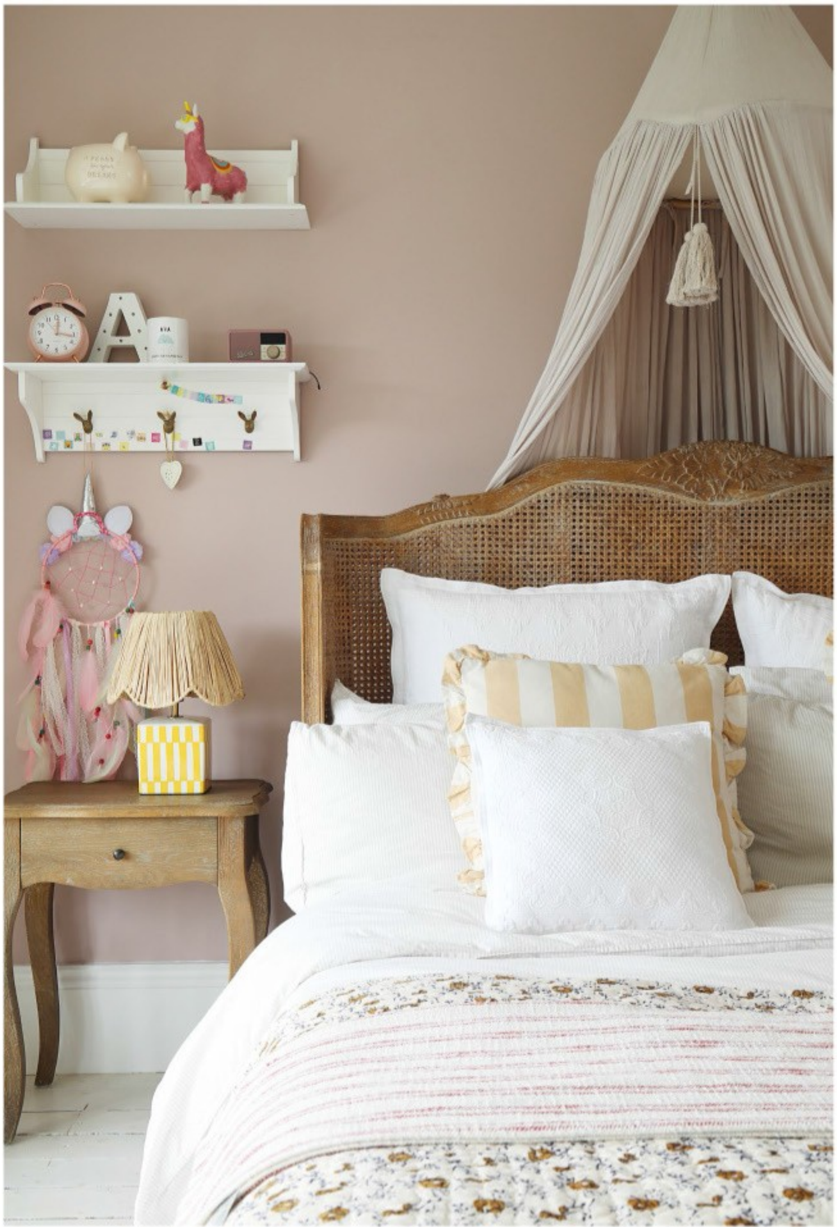
HALLWAY

The staircase has been painted dark to create continuity with the sitting room fireplace. Chevron sideboard, Atkin and Thyme. Try the tall distressed stoneware vase, Marquis & Dawe









MAIN EN SUITE
White towels and baskets pop against the dark backdrop. Chichester washstand; panelling in Charcoal, both Neptune. Washed Grey bevelled round mirror, The Range

FORD'S NURSERY
Panelling creates an interesting focal point. Oxford cotbed, Mamas & Papas. Panelling in Denim Drift, Dulux. Lion crochet head, Jenniwrenshopuk on Etsy. Try Ocotea Home Beige Tropical Leopard throw, TK Maxx

AVA'S BEDROOM
A bed canopy adds a playful touch. Versailles bed; Sienna weathered oak bedside table, both Feather & Black. Canopy, Søstrene Grene. Ines yellow raffia lamp, Oliver Bonas

MAIN BEDROOM
'Having mocked up a mood board with all the details, I just knew the scheme was going to work,' says Louise. Walls in Drop Cloth, Farrow & Ball. Langdale console with drawers, CharlesTed Home. Asymmetric mirror, Zara Home. Charlotte bed in Olive, Feather & Black

north-east facing sitting room. ‘I also tried a rusty, mustard colour in the family bathroom, but it jarred with the rest of the house.’

With the benefit of hindsight Louise admits she would have done some things differently. ‘I wish we’d incorporated archways in the extension to reflect the original ones in the hallway,’ she says. ‘And I always felt I’d compromised a bit with the bathrooms as we had two weeks notice to order everything yet many of our first choices had a 10 week lead time.’

The Foxtons’ home has also become a popular location house, available to hire through uklocations.co.uk. ‘We’ve had a real mix of shoots from pet food adverts to music videos, and even had a house full of babies for a Mamas & Papas campaign,’ reveals Louise. With plans for a media wall in the open-plan space, remote controlled blinds for the main bedroom and possibly even a loft conversion down the line, the extra income will certainly come in handy.

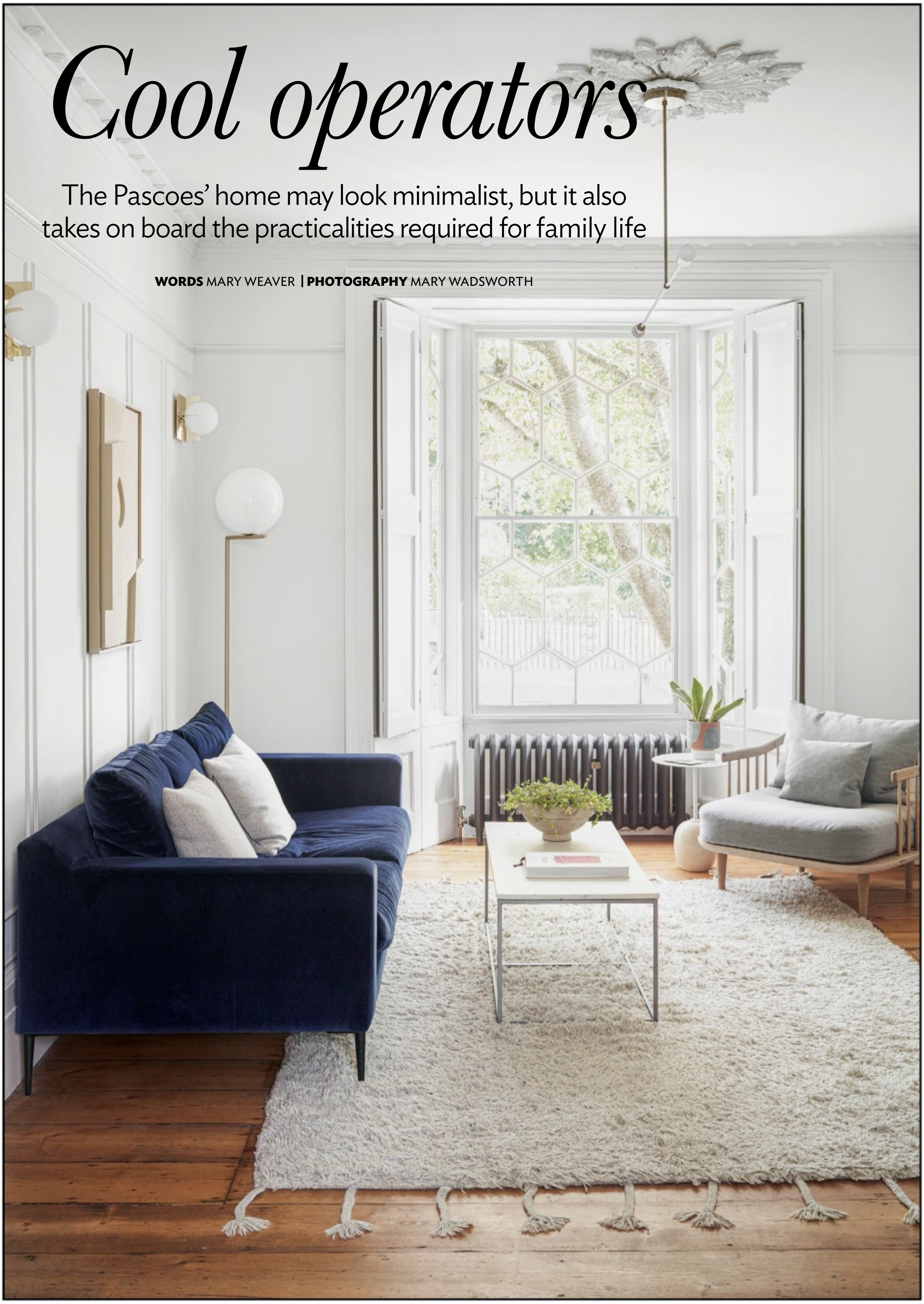
Having picked up so much renovating knowledge, Louise would love to tackle another project in future. ‘Eventually we’d like somewhere a bit more rural with a greenhouse and chickens,’ she says. ‘I feel I could do even better next time. I’ve learnt what’s feasible and to trust my instincts rather than being too influenced by ideas online which just aren’t me.’ ㉕

‘I KEEP COLOURS QUITE CALM AND LIKE THE IDEA OF HAVING NICE TEXTURES TO MAKE ROOMS FEEL TACTILE AND INVITING’

Cool operators

The Pascoes' home may look minimalist, but it also takes on board the practicalities required for family life

WORDS MARY WEAVER | **PHOTOGRAPHY** MARY WADSWORTH



no.9

HOME TRUTHS

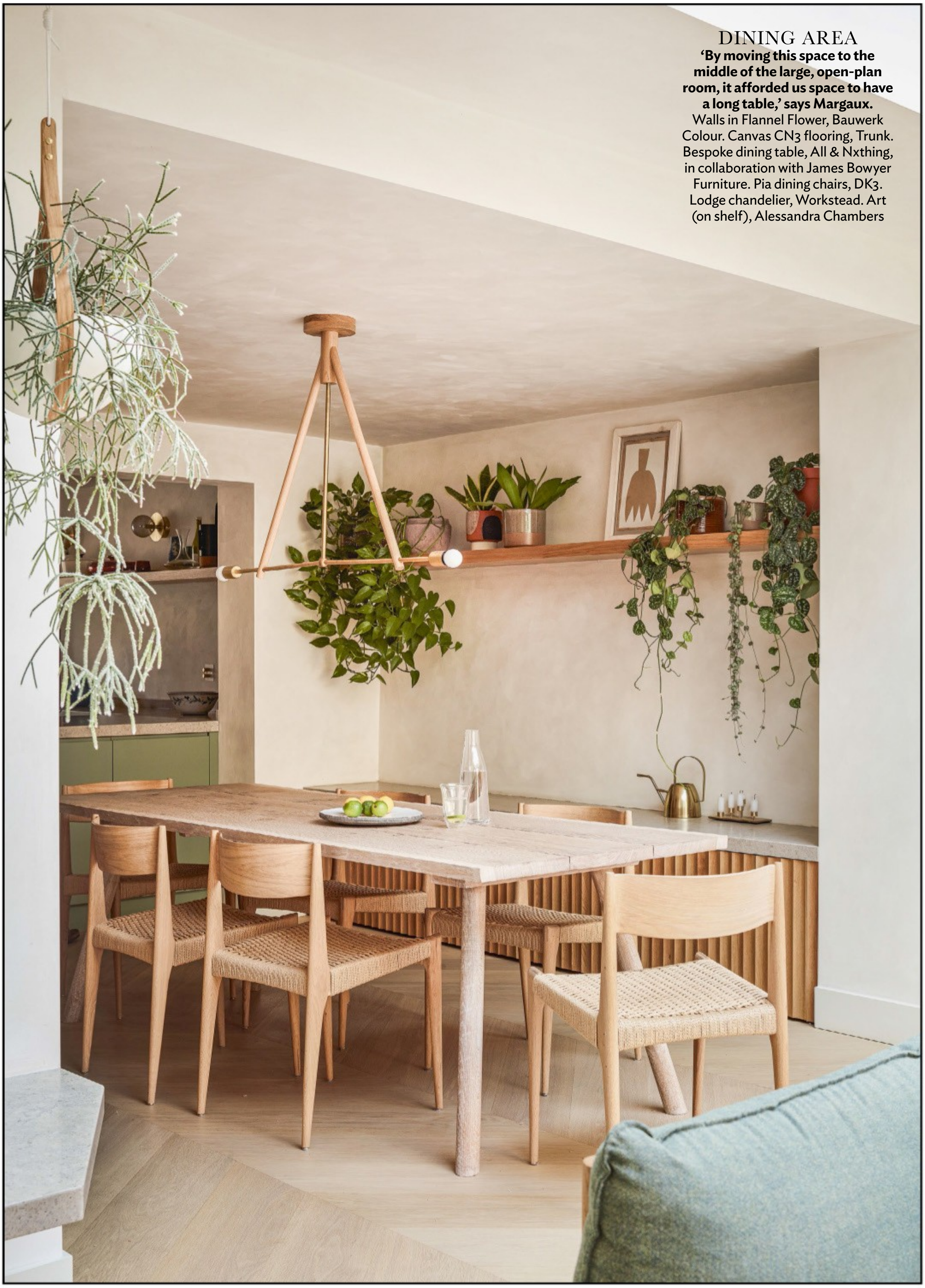
THE PROPERTY
19th-century, Grade II-listed, four-storey, Tudor-cum-Jacobean-style house

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner/family room, office, four bedrooms, two bathrooms

LOCATION North London

SITTING ROOM

'We added beading on walls to keep the traditional feel but put a modern twist on the space with contemporary lighting and furniture,' says the designer Margaux. Ceiling light, Lambert & Fils. Plane wall lights, Tom Dixon. IC F1 floor lamp (left), Flos. Coffee table; Roger Lewis for Conran sofa, The Conran Shop. Fly SC10 chair; Lato LN8 table, &Tradition. Art (on left), Edith Beurskens. Gravity floor lamp, Gubi. Face sculpture, M.A.H



DINING AREA

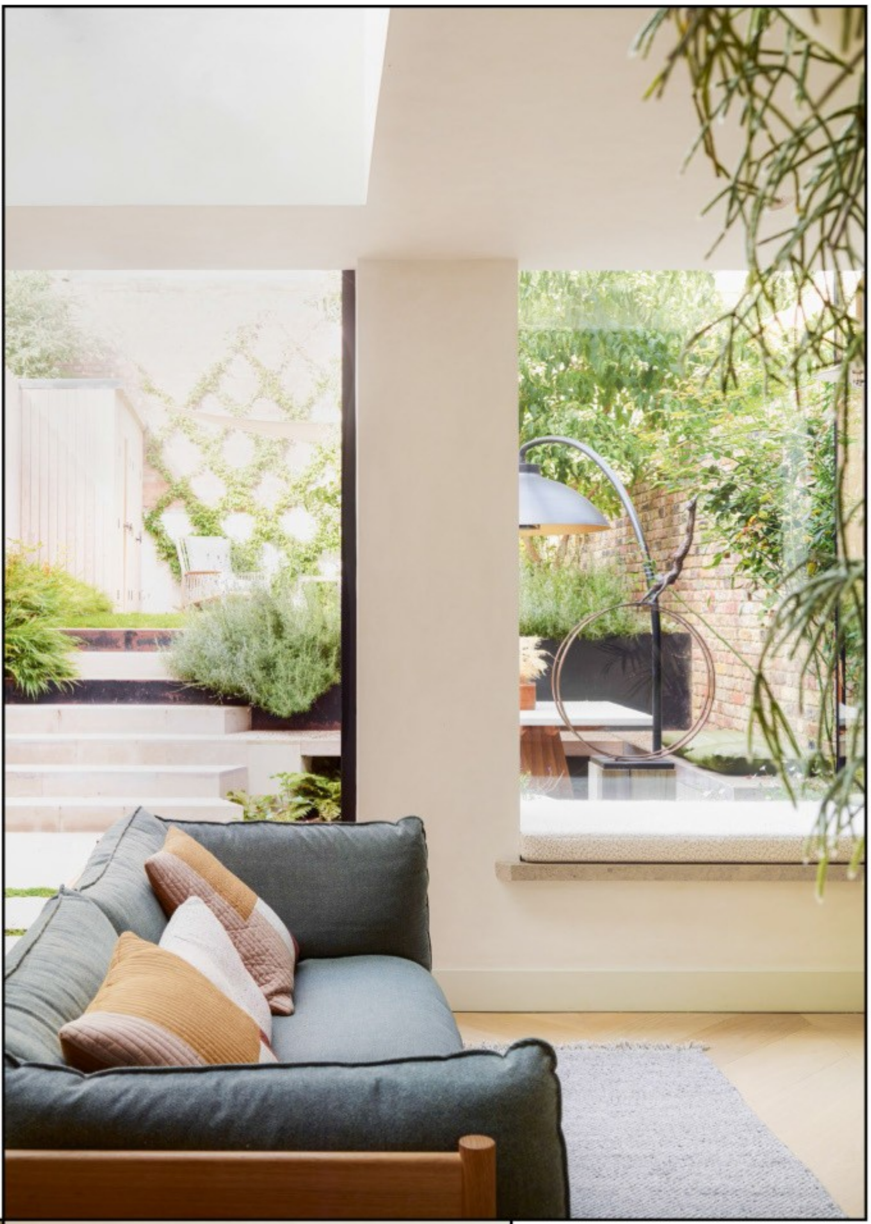
'By moving this space to the middle of the large, open-plan room, it afforded us space to have a long table,' says Margaux. Walls in Flannel Flower, Bauwerk Colour. Canvas CN3 flooring, Trunk. Bespoke dining table, All & Nxthing, in collaboration with James Bowyer Furniture. Pia dining chairs, DK3. Lodge chandelier, Workstead. Art (on shelf), Alessandra Chambers

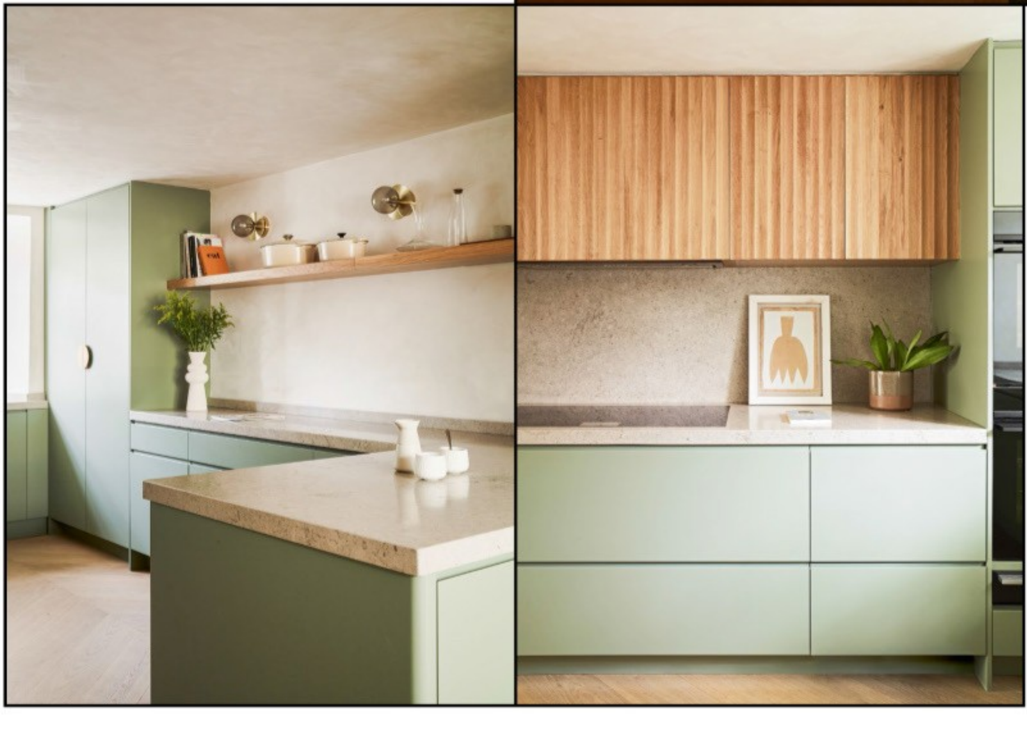
With its cool neutral tones, elegant pale chevron flooring and graphic limestone surfaces, this home sounds more art gallery than family dwelling – but thanks to the owners' vision, and the skill of their designers, it's a house that celebrates practicality, while also being wrapped in a soothing, zen-like aesthetic.

The owners, Emily and Tom Pascoe, moved into their Tudor-cum-Jacobean-style 19th-century north London home five years ago and found designers All & Nxthing on Instagram – who turned out to be based round the corner. 'It was meant to be,' says Margaux Cohen, the interior designer at All & Nxthing, who led the project, alongside founder Stephen Nash. 'From the start Emily and Tom emphasised pushing the design aspect, giving us the freedom to come up with a scheme that didn't compromise on materials or finishes. We envisaged an ethereal yet grounded space; a home where period features were honoured yet brought up to date with modern additions.'

The project was done in two parts, starting with the ground, first and second floors which were reworked without structural changes. 'It was about enhancing what was there, mixing panelling with modern lighting in the sitting room and warming up the paint colours in the bedrooms,' says Margaux.

A year later, the lower ground floor, which had already lost any historic elements,



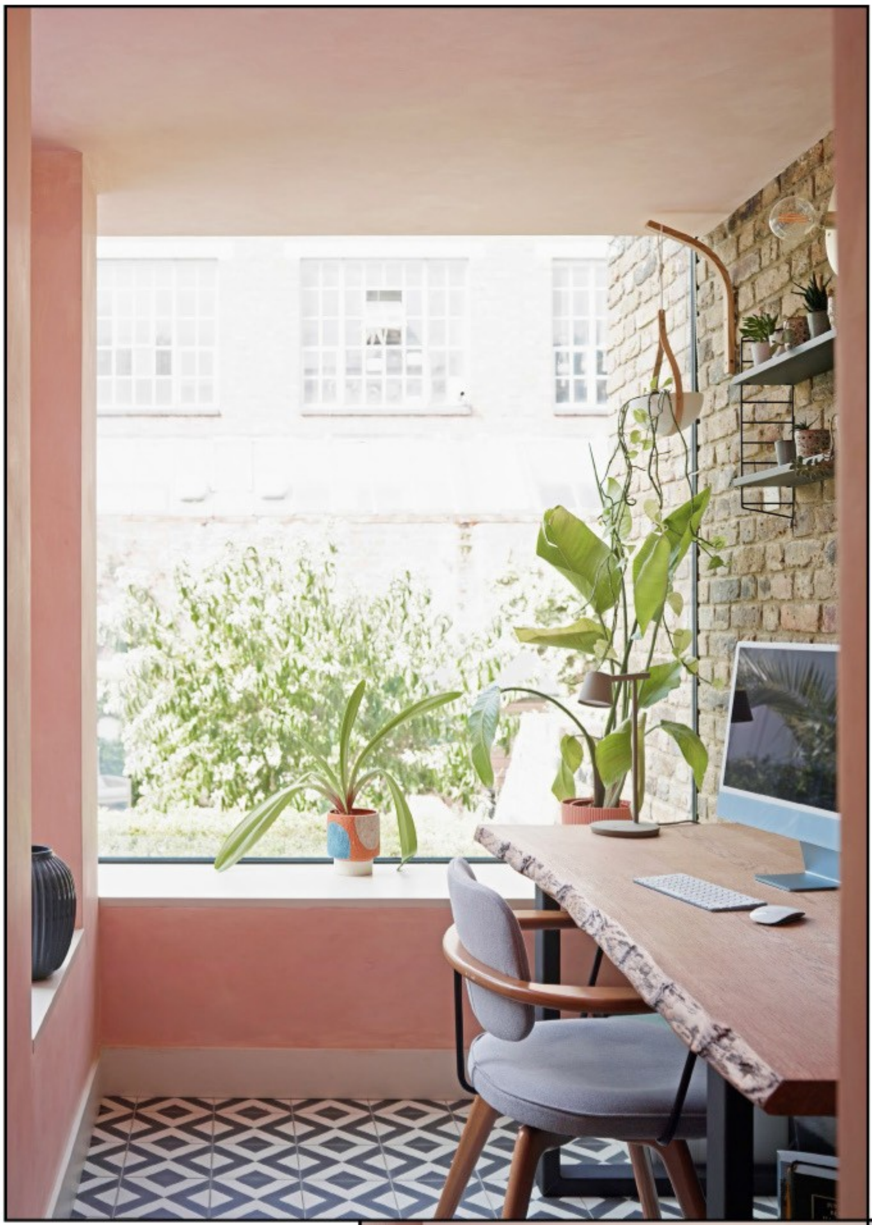


LIVING AREA

'Along with our architectural collaborator, Envelop, we made sure the doors and oriel window seat were as large as possible to make the most of the beautiful garden,' says Margaux. Window seat, designed by All & Nxthing, made by Gregos Builders; cushion in Sanctuary fabric in Natural, Chase Erwin. Rug, Ferm Living. Arbor sofa and cushions, Hay

KITCHEN

'We wanted to create an earthy, natural feel, bringing the outdoors inside,' says Margaux. 'We chose a light green for the cabinets, pairing them with a cloudy, limestone worktop.' Units in Card Room Green, Farrow & Ball; natural oak shelf, handles and Jura Blue limestone worktops, all designed by All & Nxthing, made by FP Joinery. Art Deco Smoke wall lights, Holloways of Ludlow. Vase, H&M Home. Casseroles, Le Creuset. Cream jug and cups, Pophams Home



was extended and completely redesigned in collaboration with architects Envelop. The kitchen was moved to the front of the house, the dining area sited in the middle and a family snug at the end leads onto the newly landscaped garden. 'Maximising the feel of space throughout in this essentially narrow house was important, but particularly so here,' says Margaux, who together with Stephen produced many layout iterations, incorporating that all-important storage before being satisfied. 'We had the best possible working relationship with Emily and Tom,' says Margaux. 'They were not afraid to tell us what they thought, but they also very much listened to our ideas.'

Inevitably, this floor, with its huge glass doors connecting to the beautiful new garden designed by Farlam & Chandler, and extra width gained at the back, is the heart of the home. The children – Jackson, three, and baby Sidney – can play in the snug area which has lots of concealed storage for their toys under the limestone-topped benches, while their parents cook, then the whole family comes together in the middle to eat.

With a palette of warm neutrals, from the cloudy limewash in the lower ground floor to the living area's mix of warm whites and beiges, and then darker colours the higher up you go, the house feels very zen. Natural textiles, exposed floorboards and an abundance of houseplants make the space feel calm and soothing. A big plus when you have a busy family life.

allandnxthing.com; farlamandchandler.com

OFFICE

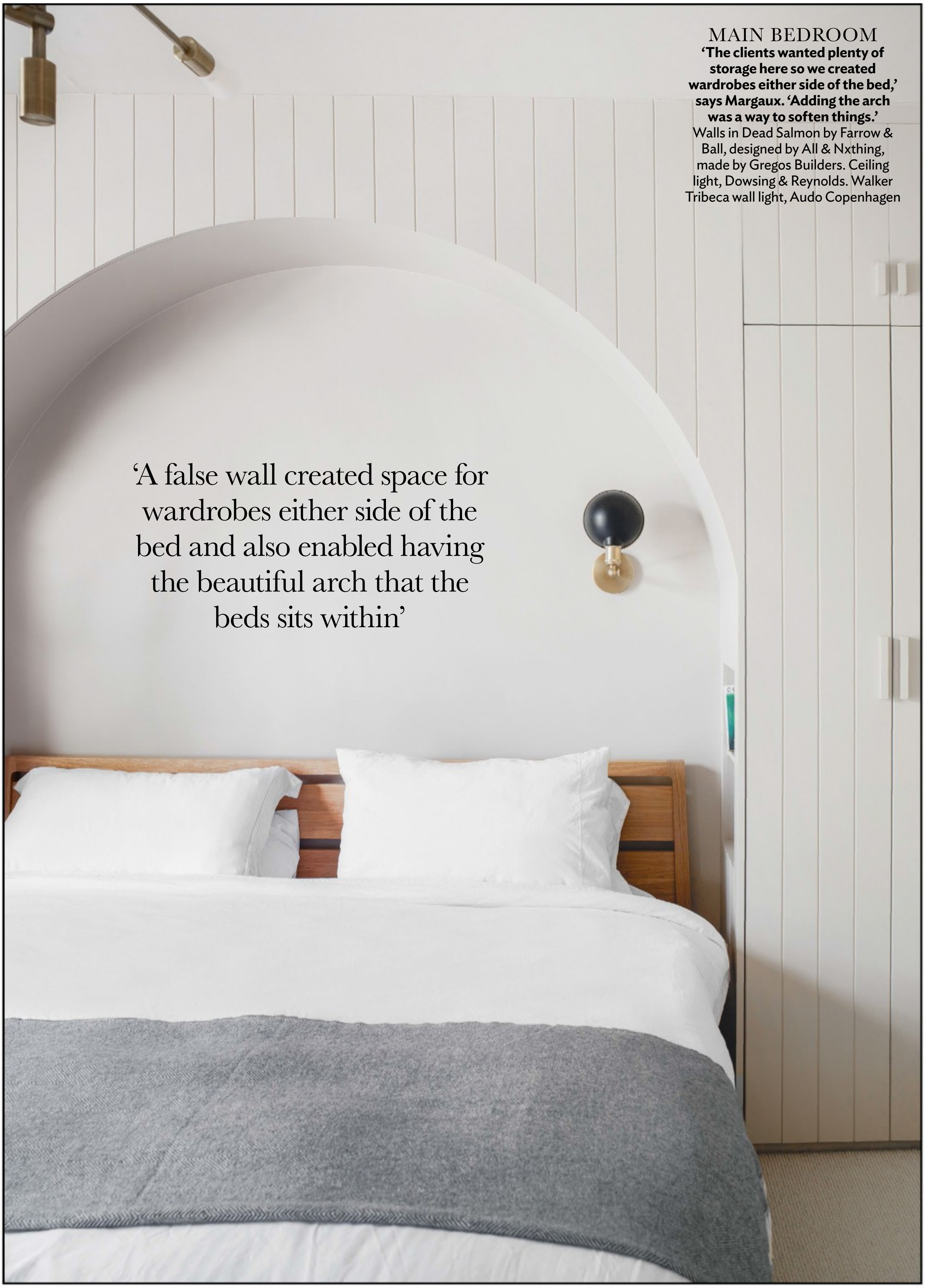
'We call this the "orangery",' says Margaux. 'The idea was to create a little sanctuary with lots of plants and fun tiles for a Moroccan feel.' Walls in Marrakesh, Bauwerk Colour. Black Vigo tiles, Bert & May. Desk, Konk Furniture. Soren Chair, John Lewis. Shelving, String Furniture

NURSERY

'We settled on soft pink for the walls,' says Margaux. 'It's a calm and fun space for the little one.' Walls in China Clay, Little Greene. Cot and tent, Scandiborn. Similar ruler, Not On The High Street. *Dark Cloud* artwork, David Hardy. Rug, La Redoute

SHOWER ROOM

'The owners wanted something crisp and simple,' says Margaux. Walls in Wimborne White, Farrow & Ball. Cabana tiles, Claybrook. Mirror, Perch & Parrow. Aureole wall light, Spark & Bell. Sink and tap, Lusso. Terrazzo worktop, In Opera Group



MAIN BEDROOM

'The clients wanted plenty of storage here so we created wardrobes either side of the bed,' says Margaux. 'Adding the arch was a way to soften things.' Walls in Dead Salmon by Farrow & Ball, designed by All & Nxthing, made by Gregos Builders. Ceiling light, Dowsing & Reynolds. Walker Tribeca wall light, Audo Copenhagen

> 'A false wall created space for wardrobes either side of the bed and also enabled having the beautiful arch that the beds sits within'

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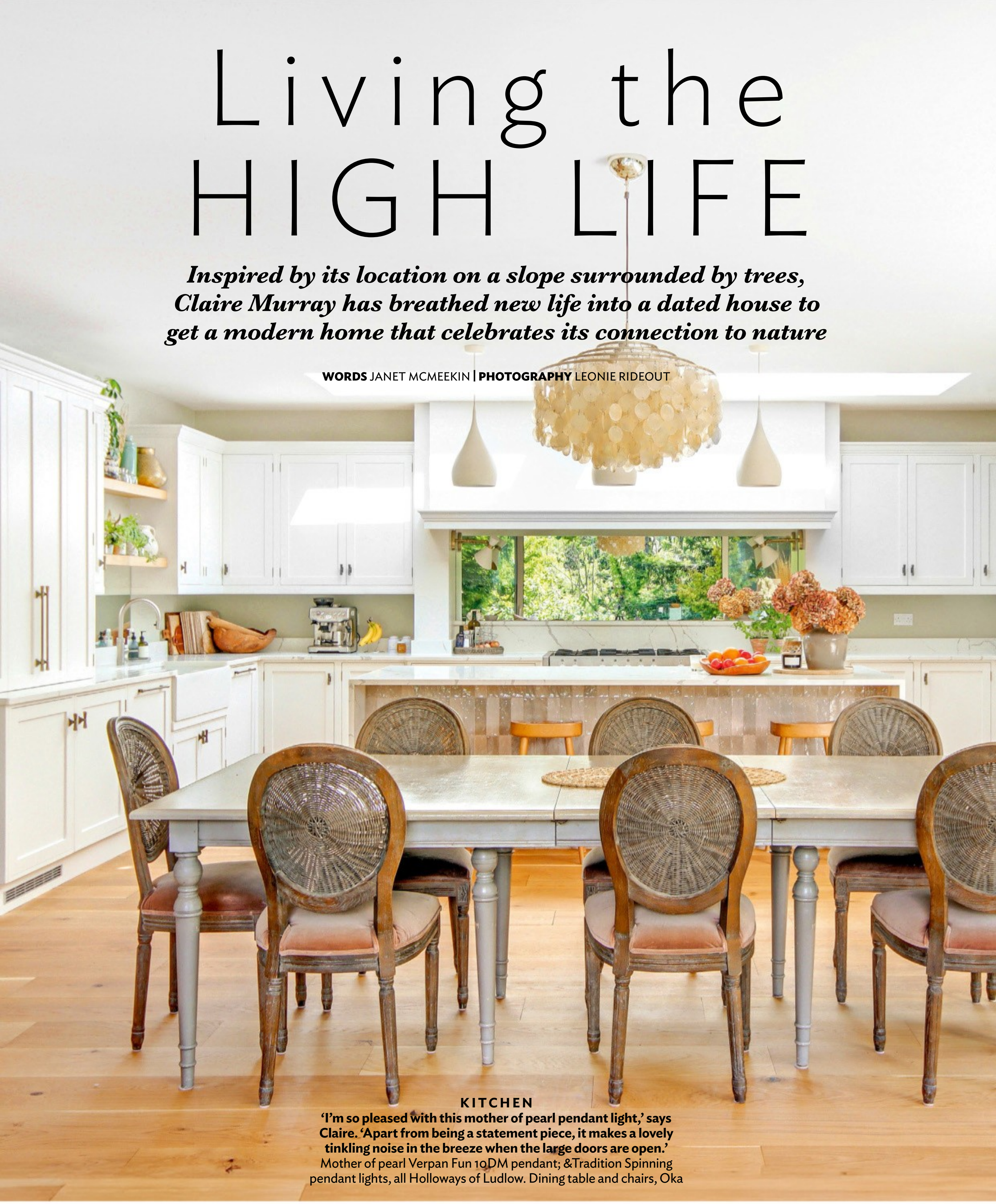
no.10

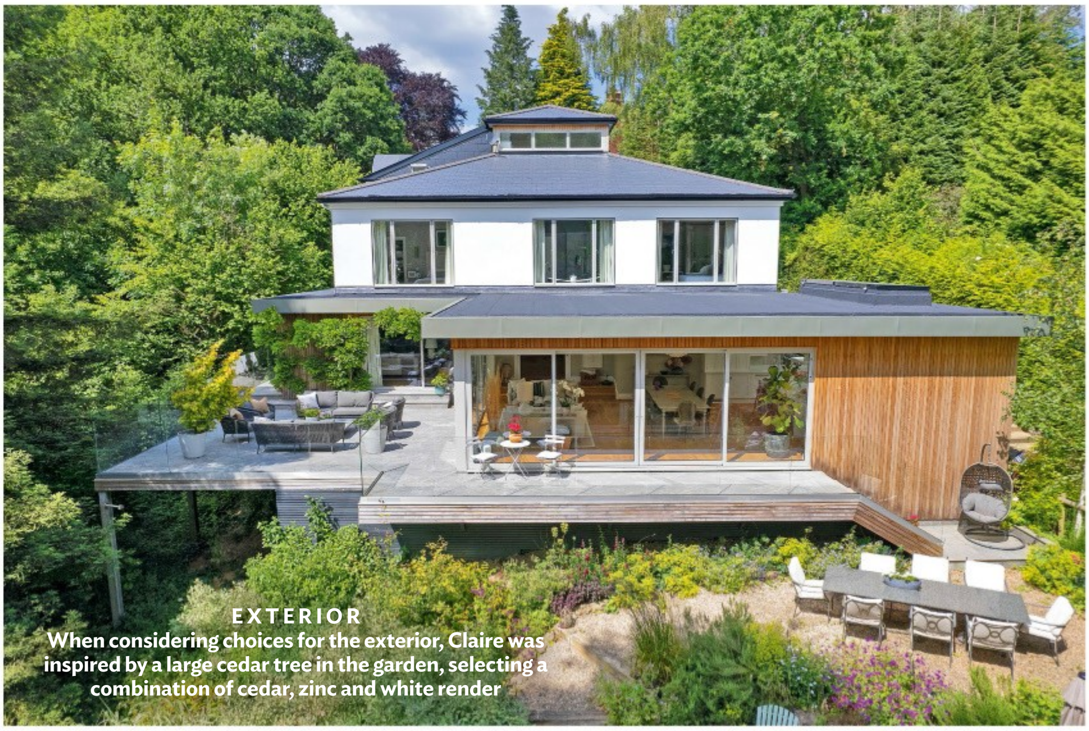
Living the HIGH LIFE

Inspired by its location on a slope surrounded by trees, Claire Murray has breathed new life into a dated house to get a modern home that celebrates its connection to nature

WORDS JANET MCMEEKIN | **PHOTOGRAPHY** LEONIE RIDEOUT

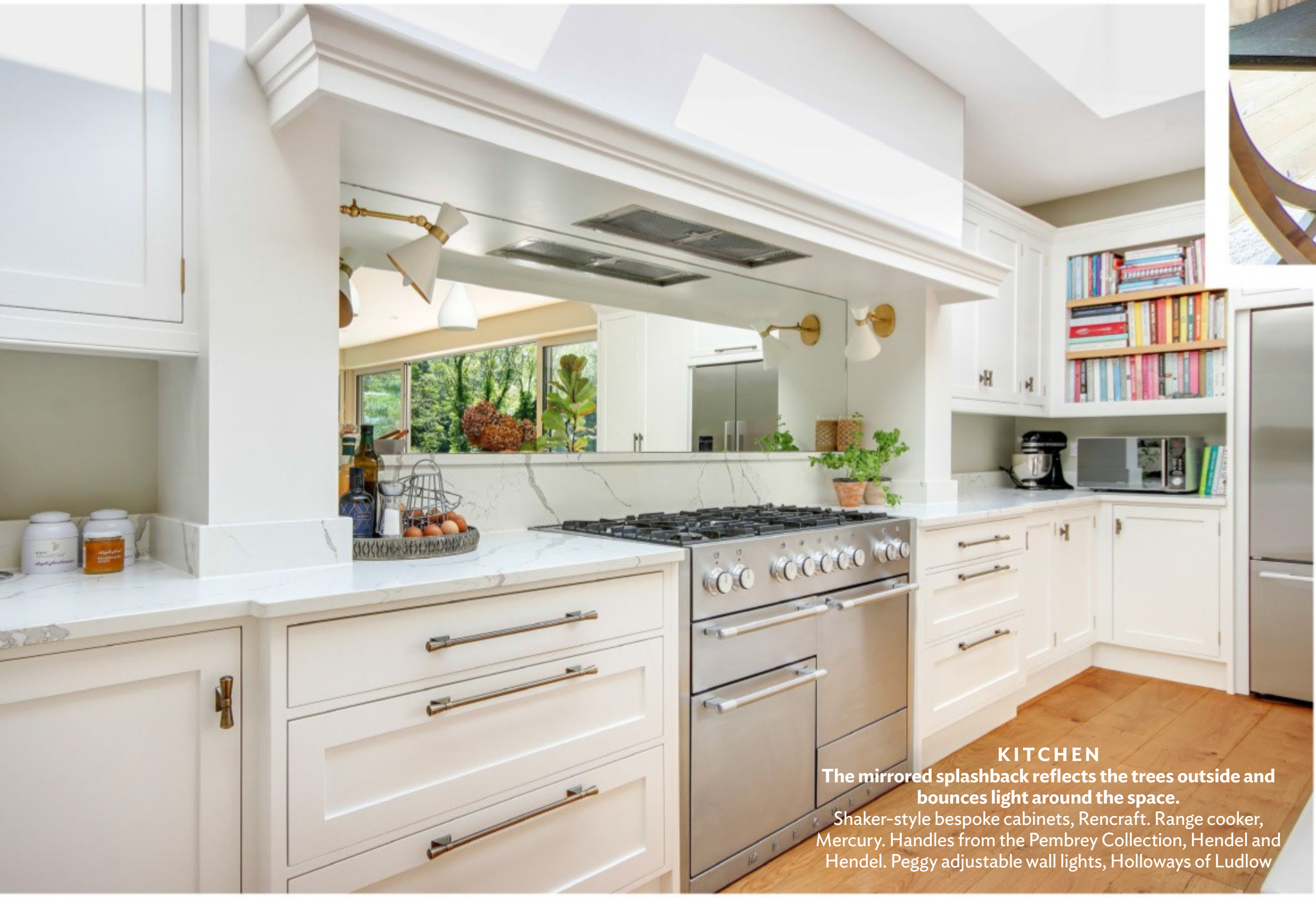


KITCHEN
'I'm so pleased with this mother of pearl pendant light,' says Claire. 'Apart from being a statement piece, it makes a lovely tinkling noise in the breeze when the large doors are open.'
Mother of pearl Verpan Fun 10DM pendant; &Tradition Spinning pendant lights, all Holloways of Ludlow. Dining table and chairs, Oka

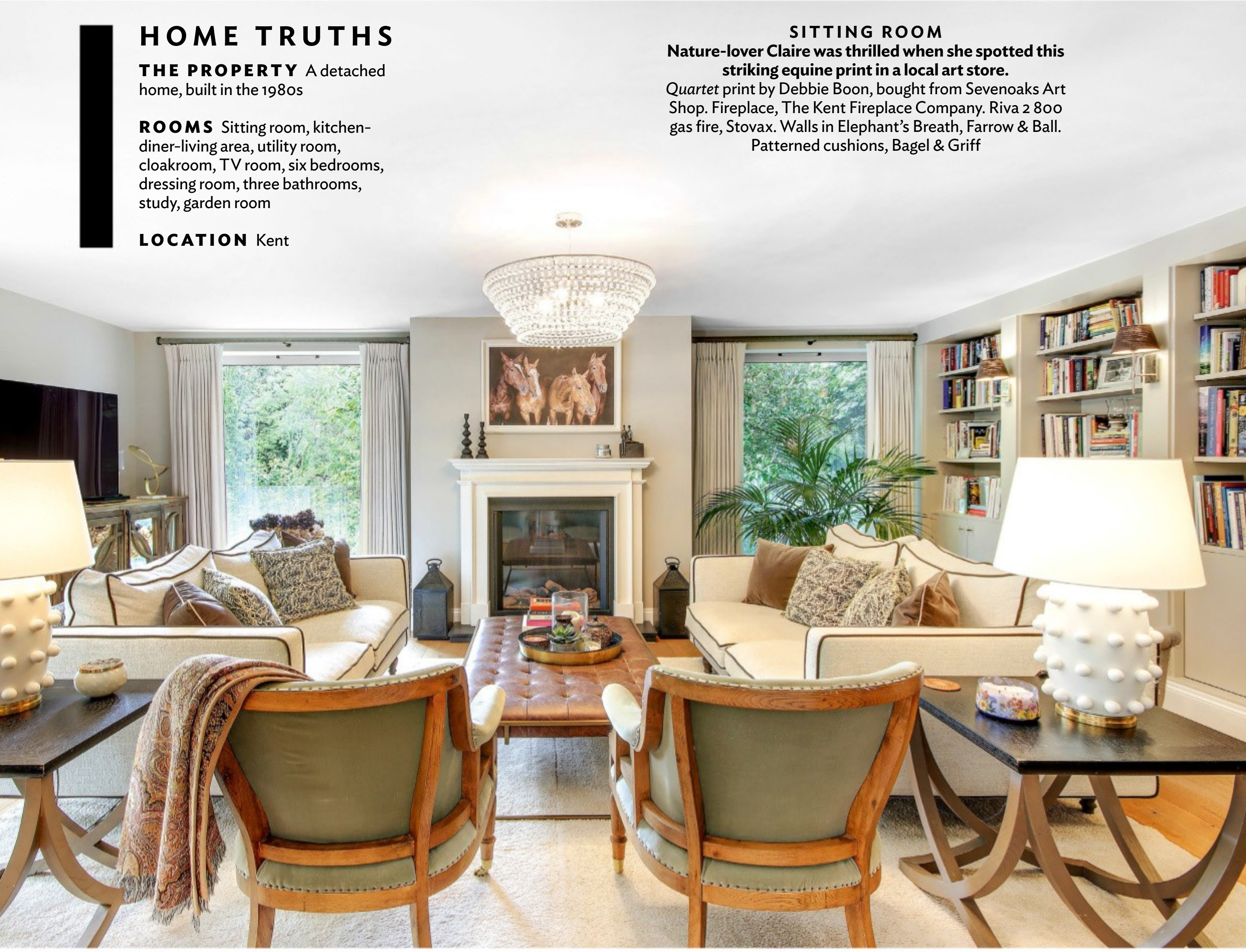


EXTERIOR
When considering choices for the exterior, Claire was inspired by a large cedar tree in the garden, selecting a combination of cedar, zinc and white render

'WHEN PEOPLE WALK IN FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEY OFTEN SAY THAT THEY FEEL AS THOUGH THEY'RE IN A TREE HOUSE'



KITCHEN
The mirrored splashback reflects the trees outside and bounces light around the space.
Shaker-style bespoke cabinets, Rencraft. Range cooker, Mercury. Handles from the Pembrey Collection, Hendel and Hendel. Peggy adjustable wall lights, Holloways of Ludlow



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY A detached home, built in the 1980s

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner-living area, utility room, cloakroom, TV room, six bedrooms, dressing room, three bathrooms, study, garden room

LOCATION Kent

SITTING ROOM
Nature-lover Claire was thrilled when she spotted this striking equine print in a local art store.
Quartet print by Debbie Boon, bought from Sevenoaks Art Shop. Fireplace, The Kent Fireplace Company. Riva 2 800 gas fire, Stovax. Walls in Elephant's Breath, Farrow & Ball. Patterned cushions, Bagel & Griff

Designer and renovator Claire Murray has a happy knack of uncovering 'ugly duckling' properties and transforming them into beautiful, welcoming homes.

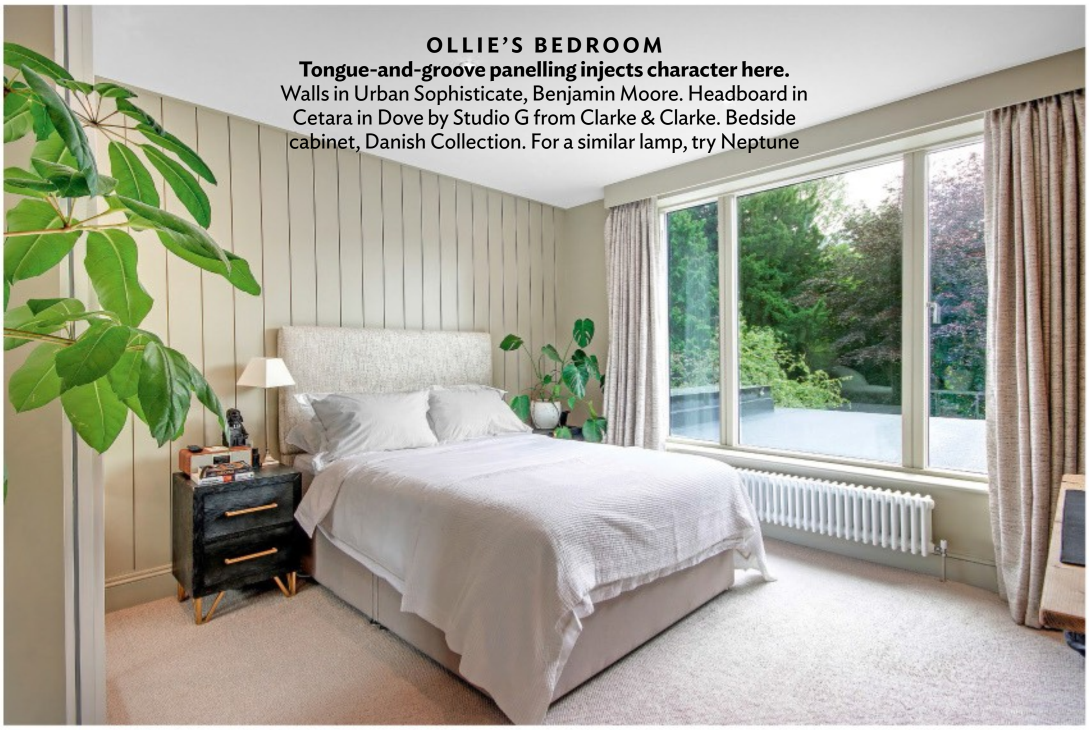
'When I first viewed this house, it was like a big brown cube on a slope with no kerb appeal whatsoever, and a very unusual layout,' explains Claire. 'I loved its secluded, elevated location and the fact that it was surrounded by gorgeous, mature trees. All I could see was the potential to create a unique home that feels as though it's suspended in the treetops.'

Fired up, Claire persuaded her husband Neil that she could, again, work her magic and turn the building into something special. In 2016, the couple bought their 12th home – and eighth renovation project.

An advocate for biophilic design, Claire has a passion for connecting homes to nature and realised that to bring her vision for an airy tranquil home to fruition, she would need to gut, completely remodel and extend the property. 'When viewing either my own or clients' properties, I look around with a pair of internal virtual reality goggles on,' says Claire, who runs her own design studio, Claire Murray Interiors. 'I knew the design of this house would be challenging and it took me seven attempts before I was happy with everything.'

Altering the higgledy-piggledy layout, Claire positioned all the reception rooms in the lower ground floor level, created six bedrooms and three bathrooms on the upper two floors, a mezzanine office at the top of the house and a garden studio. 'I wanted to incorporate plenty of glass doors and windows,' she explains. 'At the rear, I felt a cantilevered L-shaped extension for the kitchen-diner and sitting room would work well. For the exterior, I chose cedar cladding, render and zinc.'

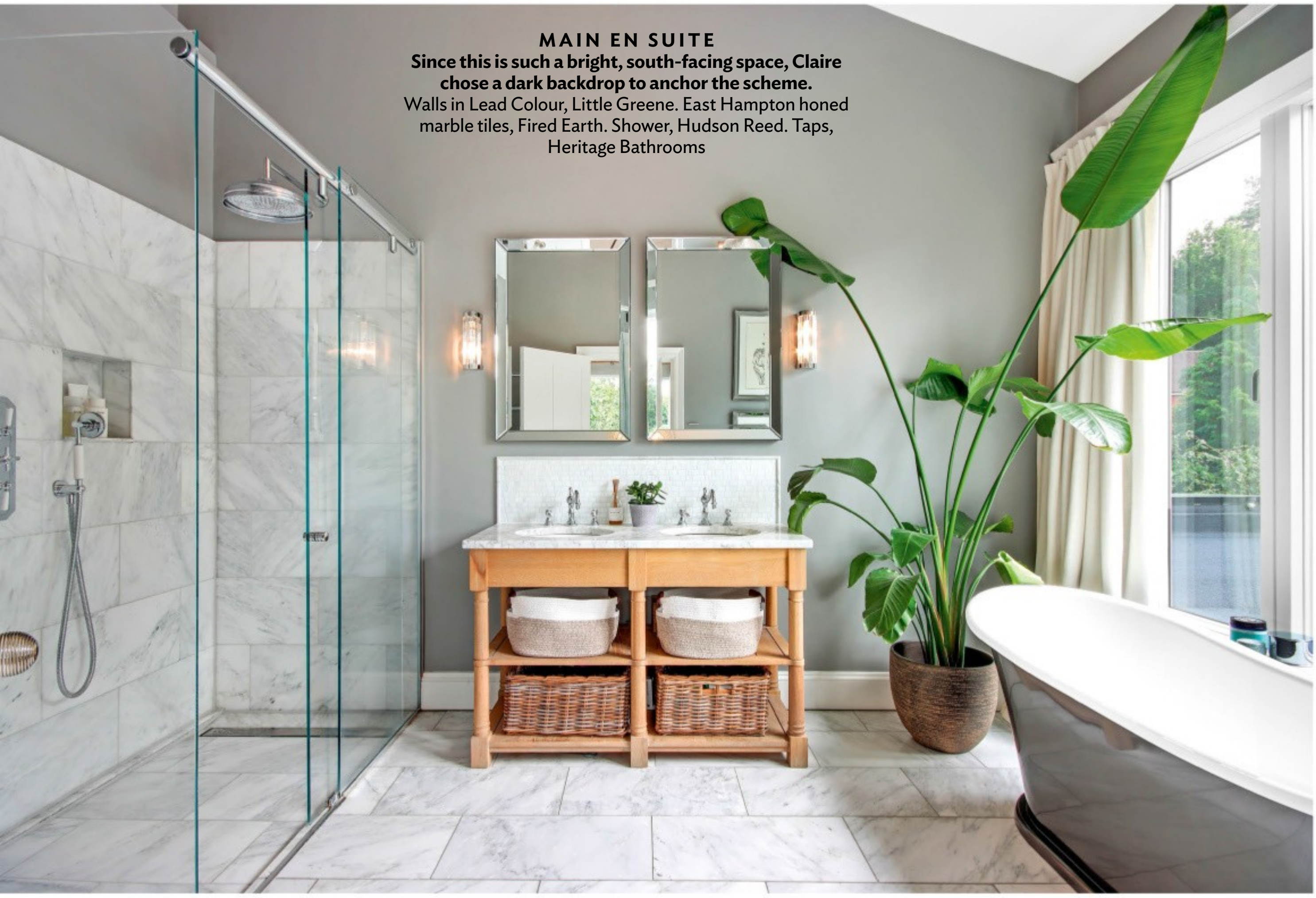
Claire liaised with an architect and structural engineer to draw up the plans for the remodelled house.



OLLIE'S BEDROOM

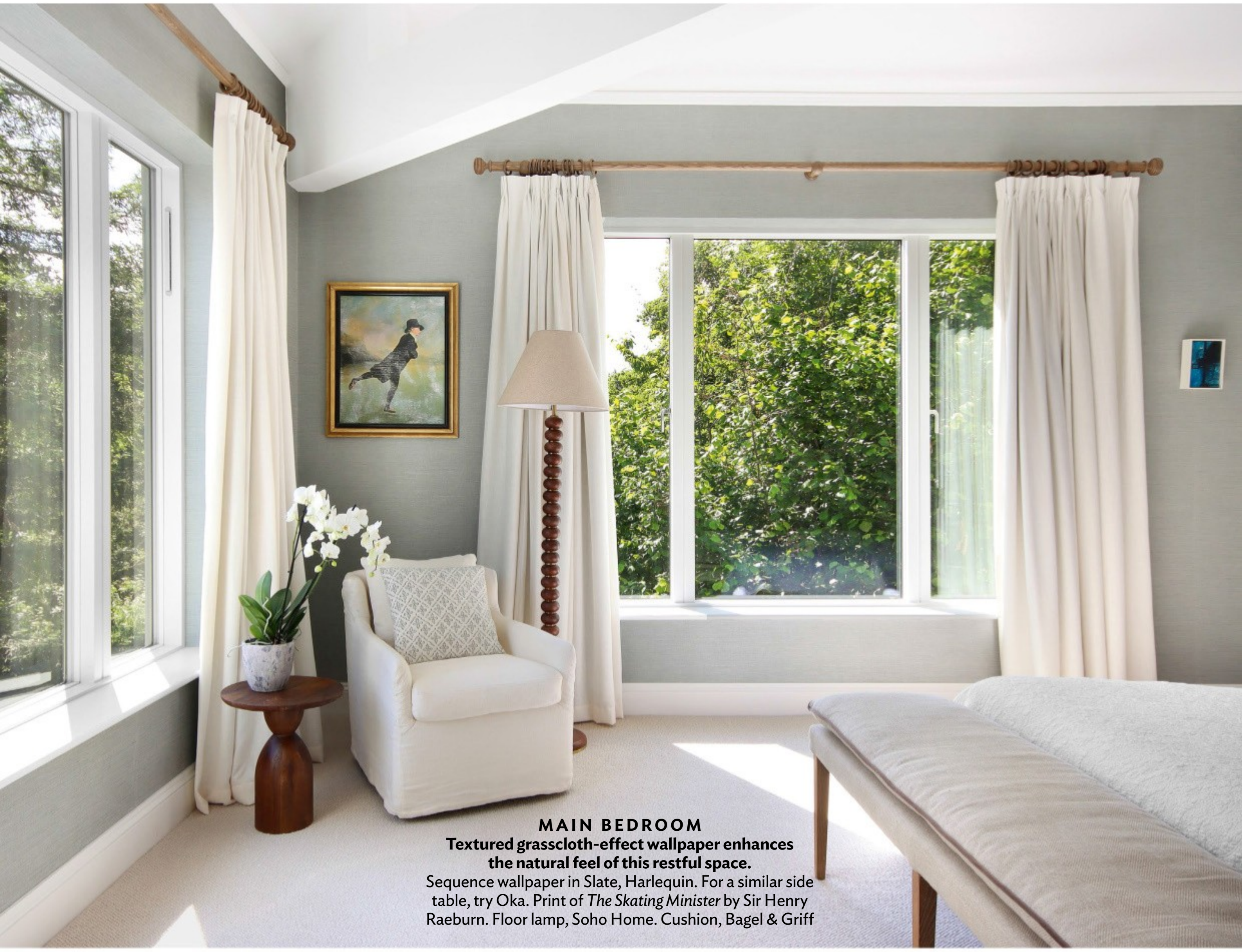
Tongue-and-groove panelling injects character here. Walls in Urban Sophisticate, Benjamin Moore. Headboard in Cetara in Dove by Studio G from Clarke & Clarke. Bedside cabinet, Danish Collection. For a similar lamp, try Neptune

> **'LIVING SO CLOSE TO NATURE MEANS WE HAVE THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCING EVERY SEASON AT CLOSE HAND'**



MAIN EN SUITE

Since this is such a bright, south-facing space, Claire chose a dark backdrop to anchor the scheme. Walls in Lead Colour, Little Greene. East Hampton honed marble tiles, Fired Earth. Shower, Hudson Reed. Taps, Heritage Bathrooms



MAIN BEDROOM
Textured grasscloth-effect wallpaper enhances the natural feel of this restful space.
Sequence wallpaper in Slate, Harlequin. For a similar side table, try Oka. Print of *The Skating Minister* by Sir Henry Raeburn. Floor lamp, Soho Home. Cushion, Bagel & Griff

Planning permission was eventually granted and, in the spring of 2017, the building project began.

'My priority was constructing the garden studio to work from so that I could oversee the build,' says Claire. 'It was also handy for storing building materials.' Despite never having built anything as ambitious as this before, Claire took everything in her stride. 'Watching the construction was fascinating,' says Claire. 'Due to the sloping site, we had to crane 93 steels over the top of the house. That was an interesting five days!'

In June 2017, the couple and their sons Max, George, James and Ollie, moved out of their rental house and into their partially finished abode. 'We made a makeshift dining table and had a celebratory barbecue outside in the steel and concrete extension – despite it not having a roof,' she recalls.

At the moving in stage, the kitchen and bathrooms were fitted and, over the next three years, all the other spaces came together gradually. When considering the schemes for the interiors, Claire chose a neutral palette, introducing some colour with splashes of mainly sage green and blues. 'I like to inject interest and impact with texture,' she reveals. 'I prefer subtle hues, rather than anything too bold. Our sons seem to have inherited my preference for pared-back interiors, since when I encouraged them to get involved with designing their rooms, nobody went too wild!'

Claire, who describes her style as classic with a contemporary twist, likes to keep a thread running throughout the house to create a cohesive feel. 'Nearly every room features blues or greens and oak,' she explains. 'Large indoor plants have also worked really well throughout, complementing the setting. It's now a very uplifting, bright home and great for your mental health, whatever the weather.'

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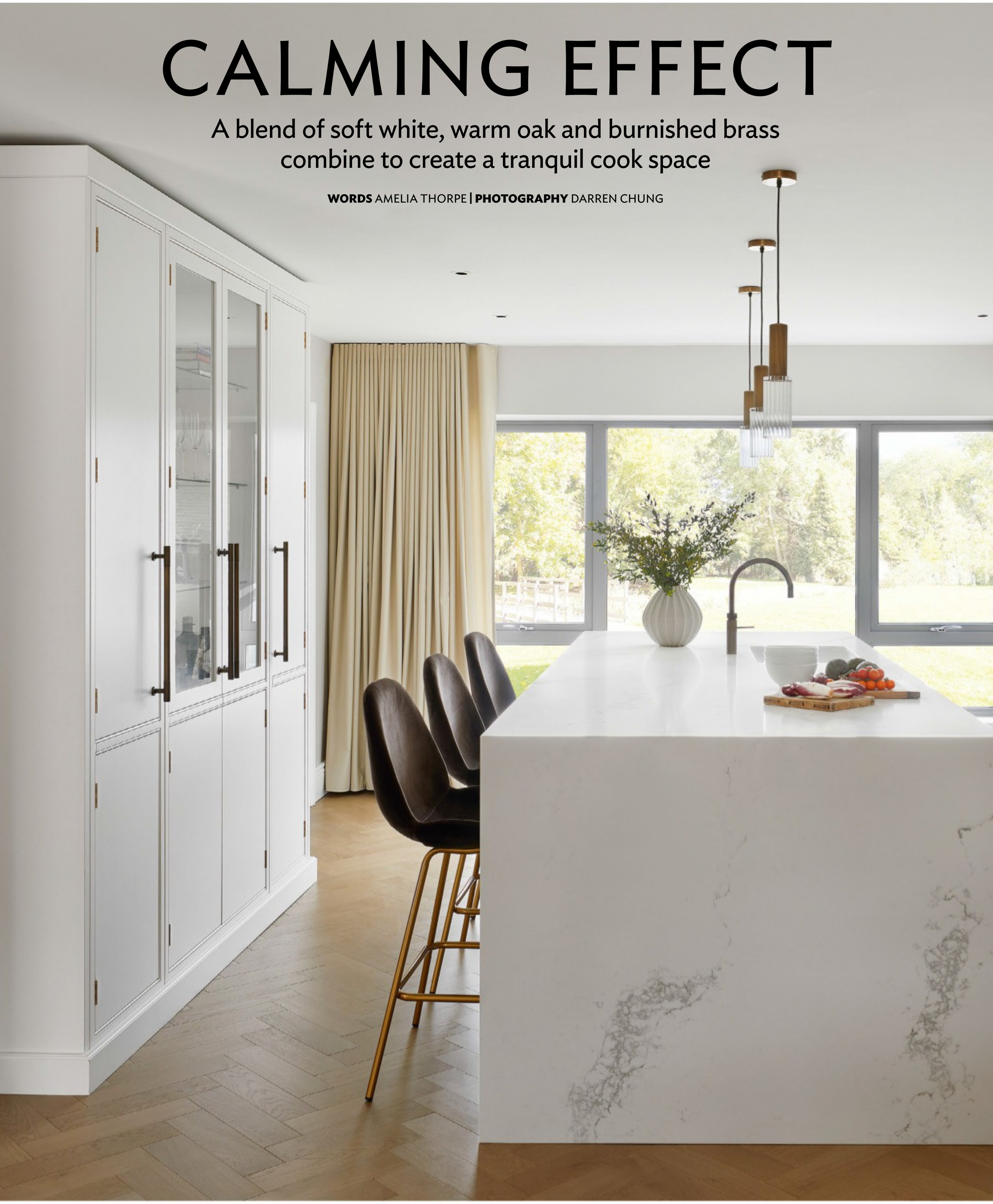
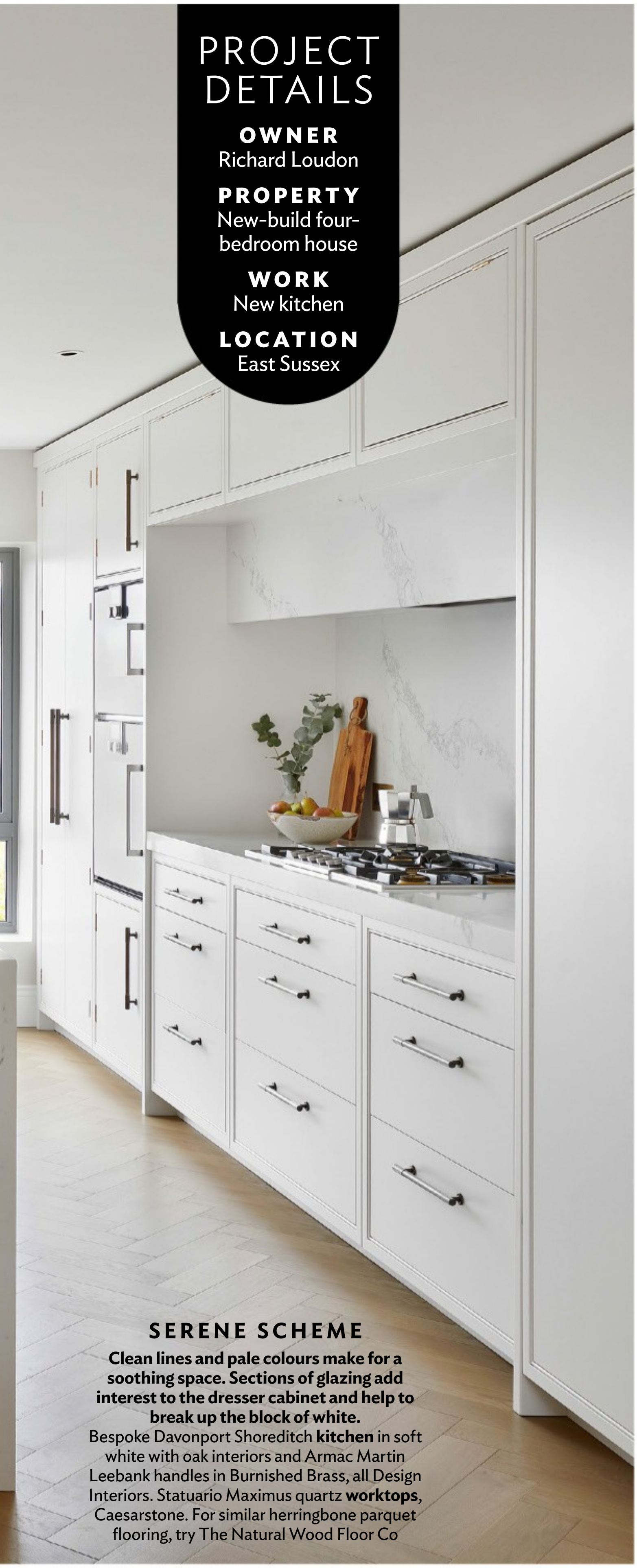


CALMING EFFECT

A blend of soft white, warm oak and burnished brass combine to create a tranquil cook space

WORDS AMELIA THORPE | **PHOTOGRAPHY** DARREN CHUNG

no. 11



PROJECT DETAILS

OWNER
Richard Loudon

PROPERTY
New-build four-bedroom house

WORK
New kitchen

LOCATION
East Sussex

SERENE SCHEME

Clean lines and pale colours make for a soothing space. Sections of glazing add interest to the dresser cabinet and help to break up the block of white. Bespoke Davonport Shoreditch **kitchen** in soft white with oak interiors and Armac Martin Leebank handles in Burnished Brass, all Design Interiors. Statuario Maximus quartz **worktops**, Caesarstone. For similar herringbone parquet flooring, try The Natural Wood Floor Co

'I wanted to build a forever home,' says Richard Loudon. 'I couldn't find a house that suited what I had in mind, so I chose this plot for its ideal location and began to hatch a plan.' He commissioned MA Architecture & Interior Design to work on the design for the three-storey house.

1 MAKING PLANS

The brief for the kitchen was to maximise its views of its beautiful garden setting and create an inside-outside feel. With plans underway, it was time to visit Tim Brown, senior designer of Design Interiors, who had designed a kitchen in Richard's previous home, to produce the kitchen space.

2 CREATING THE WISH LIST

'I enjoy cooking and find it quite meditative,' says Richard, who works in finance. 'I wanted a large island with plenty of work surface for preparing meals, with a space for bar stools – somewhere to sit and relax with friends and with my daughter when she visits.' He also specified top of the range appliances including a powerful gas hob to suit his love of cooking, and a calm colour scheme. 'I wanted the whole house, including the kitchen, to have a peaceful mood and to feel like a sanctuary,' he says. The central island bridges a china and glassware dresser on one wall and built-in appliances in tall cabinets on the other. 'I like to cook steak on a high heat and wanted to avoid smoke filling the room, so I knew a powerful extractor was needed,' says Richard. Keen to avoid a big hood dominating the space, the extractor is concealed behind a streamlined pelmet above the hob, its quartz finish chosen to match the splashback.

3 CLASSIC MODERN

Balancing his taste for contemporary design with his love of antiques, Richard chose the Shoreditch range of in-frame cabinetry, made by bespoke furniture specialist Davonport for Design Interiors. Tim explains: 'It is traditionally made, but the doors have a simple frame with central flat panel to add a modern twist. Painted in a warm white, the look is softly tranquil, an effect picked up in the choice of quartz worktops.'

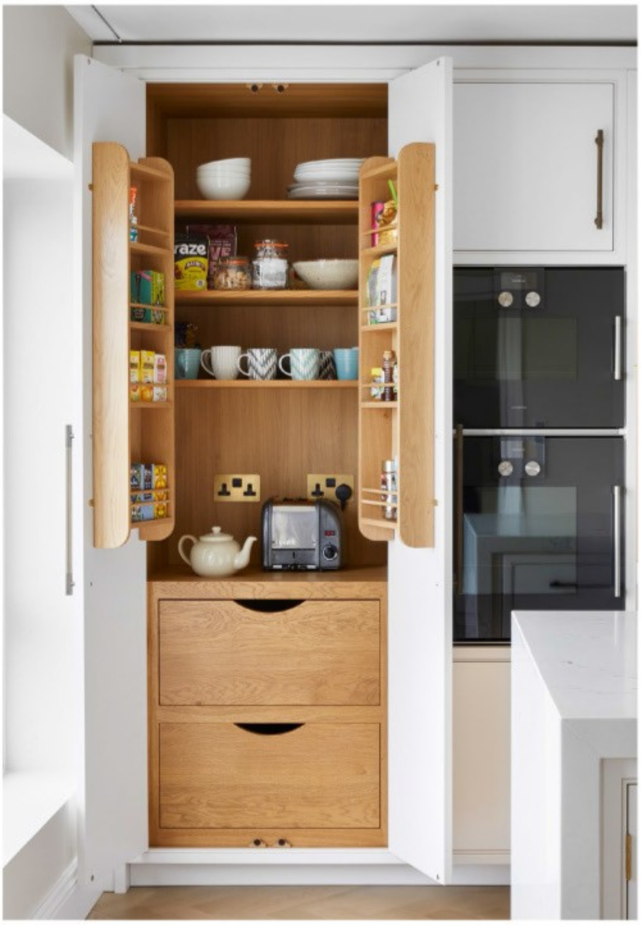
4 ADDING WARMTH

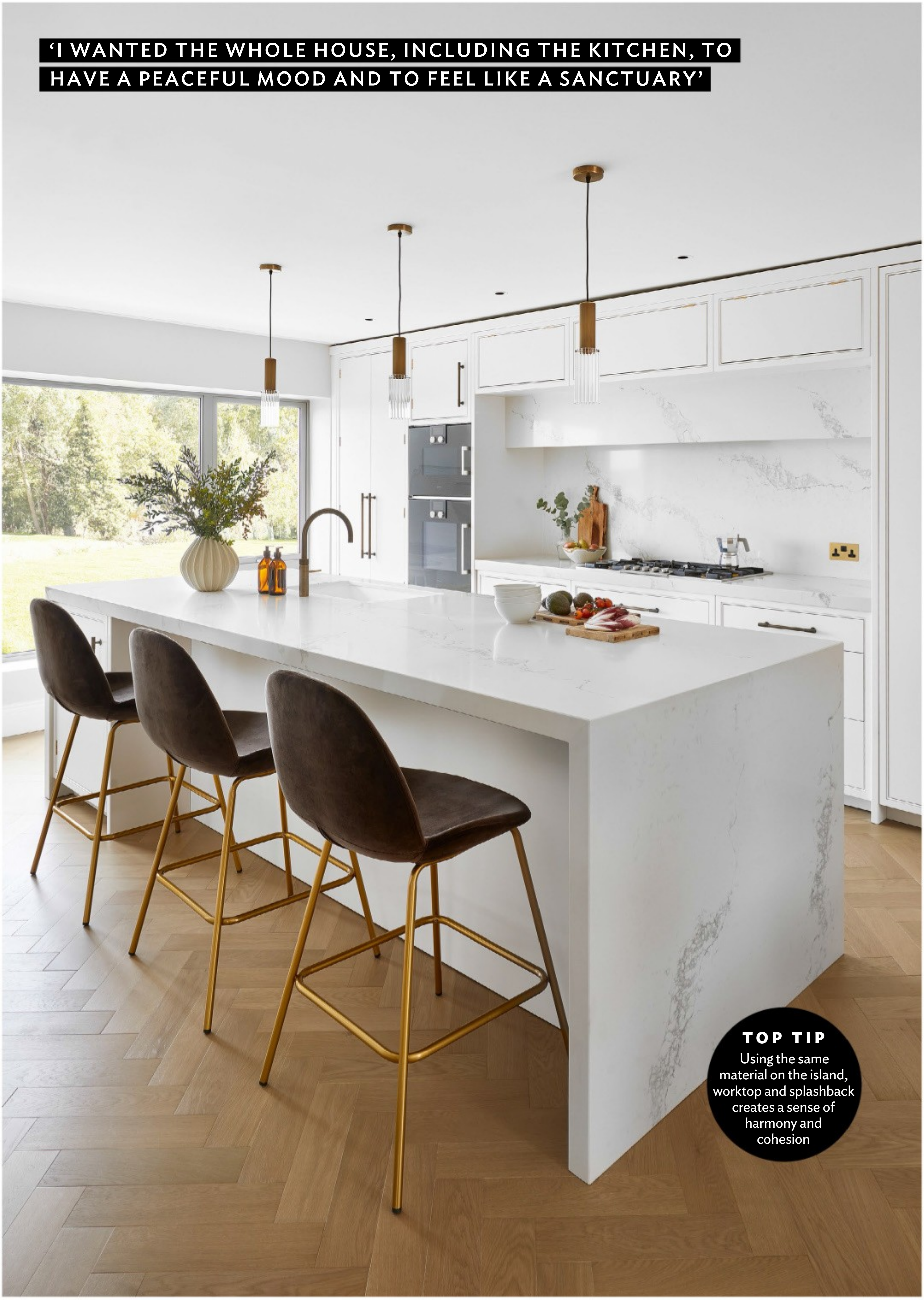
Accents of oak – from the parquet floor to the cupboard interiors – and burnished brass details soften the overall look and add gentle warmth. 'It is a beautiful place of calm,' notes Richard.

maarch.co.uk; design-interiors.com

SEAMLESS FLOW

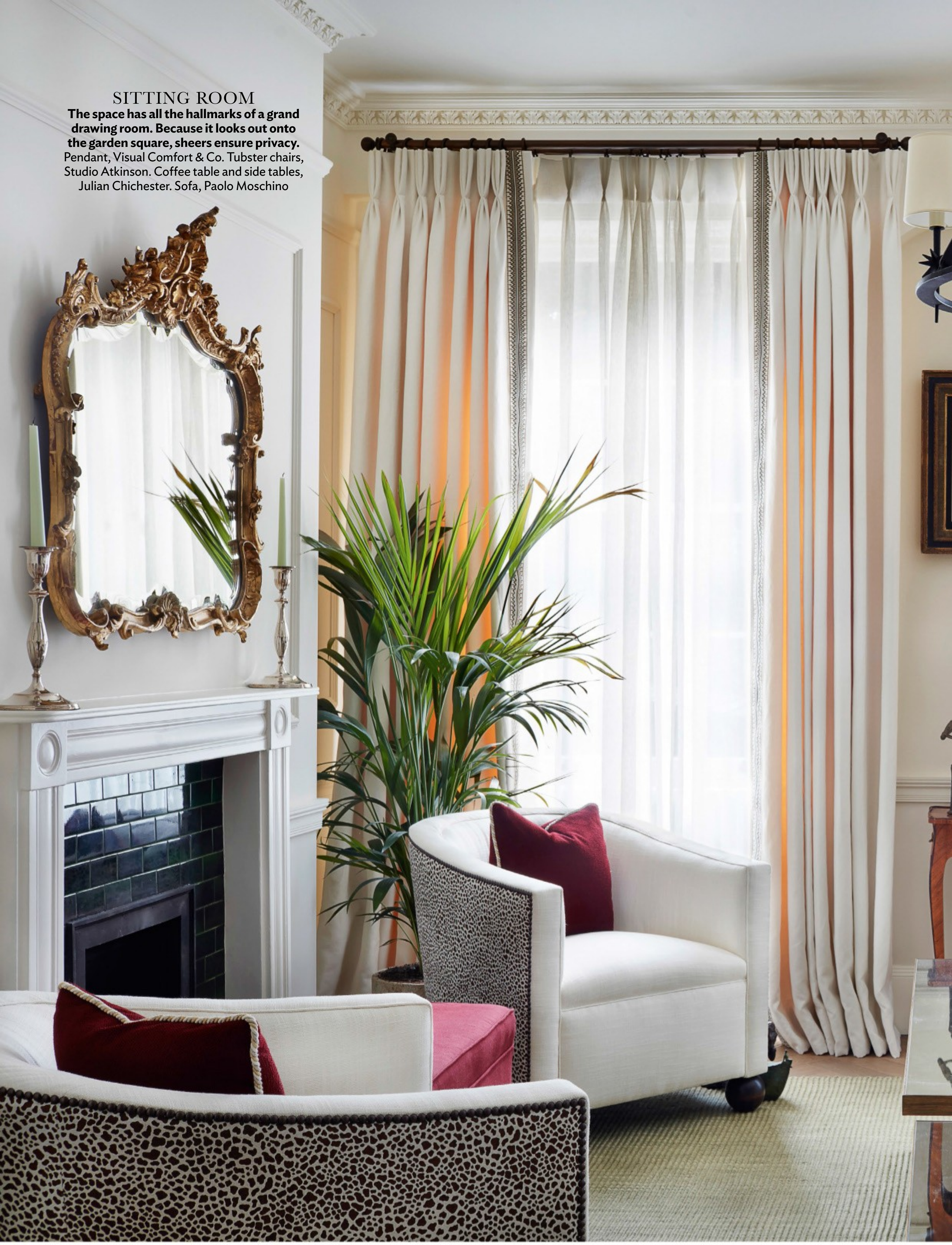
The kitchen leads on to the dining area with sliding glass doors to the garden. Richard bought the chandelier at auction years ago and it now introduces an antique element to the space. The oak-lined breakfast cupboard adds warmth to the design. **Oven**, combination **microwave**, gas **hob**, built-in **extractor**, integrated **larder fridge**, integrated **larder freezer**, fully integrated **dishwasher**, all Gaggenau. Fusion round **boiling water 3-in-1 tap** in Patinated Brass, Quooker. **Sink**, Blanco. **Pendant lights**, J. Adams & Co. For similar **bar stools**, try Eichholtz. **Dining table**, Barker and Stonehouse. **Dining chairs**, Eichholtz





‘I WANTED THE WHOLE HOUSE, INCLUDING THE KITCHEN, TO HAVE A PEACEFUL MOOD AND TO FEEL LIKE A SANCTUARY’

TOP TIP
Using the same material on the island, worktop and splashback creates a sense of harmony and cohesion



SITTING ROOM

The space has all the hallmarks of a grand drawing room. Because it looks out onto the garden square, sheers ensure privacy. Pendant, Visual Comfort & Co. Tubster chairs, Studio Atkinson. Coffee table and side tables, Julian Chichester. Sofa, Paolo Moschino

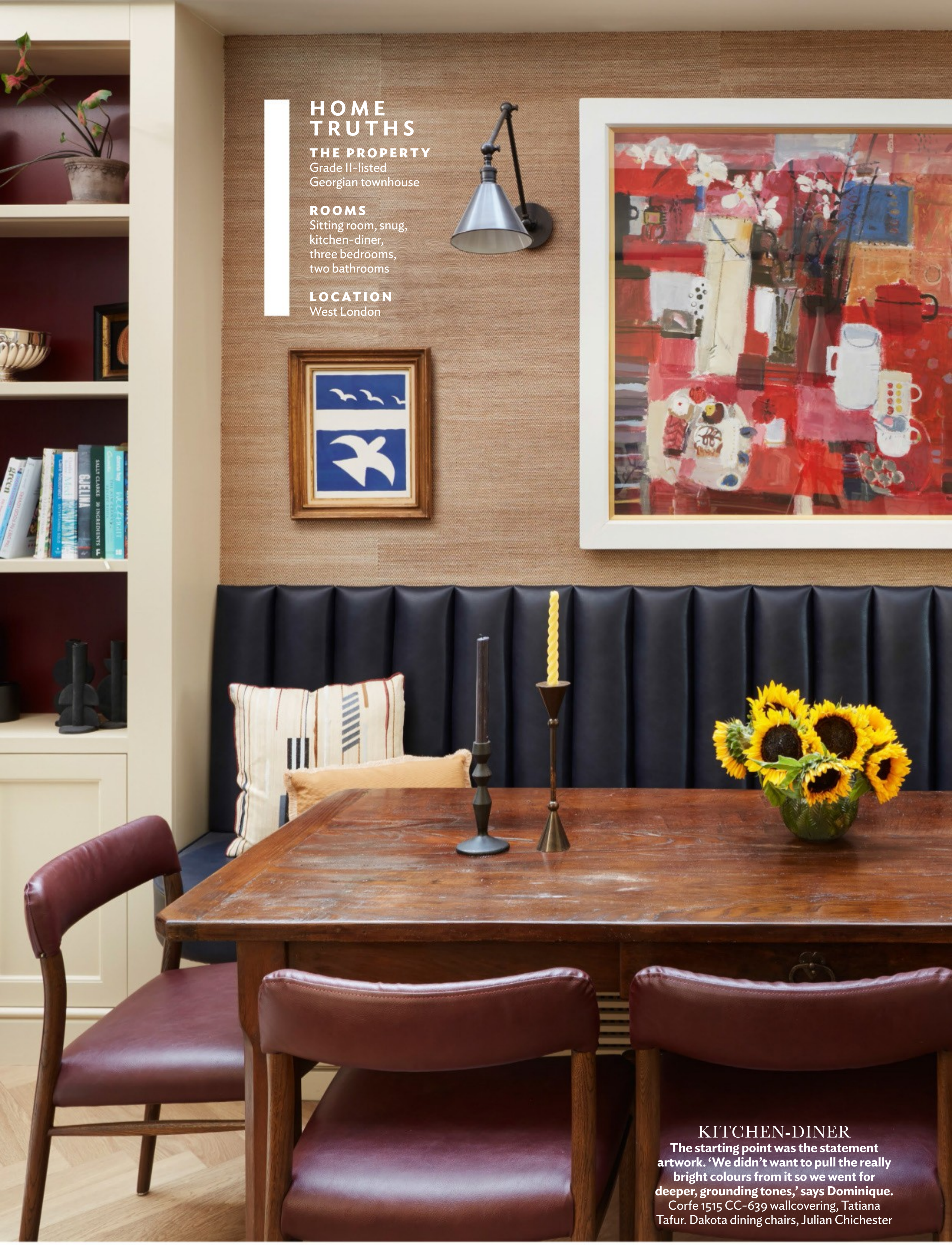
ANTARCTICA
SEBASTIÃO SALGADO
GENESIS
BOMB DAMAGE
1939-1945

no. 12

Making the GRADE

Time stood still in Nathalie Hirst's Grade II-listed townhouse but now every room is refreshed and honours the past while still feeling modern

WORDS VIVIENNE AYERS | **PHOTOGRAPHY** LUKE WHITE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Grade II-listed
Georgian townhouse

ROOMS
Sitting room, snug,
kitchen-diner,
three bedrooms,
two bathrooms

LOCATION
West London

KITCHEN-DINER
The starting point was the statement artwork. 'We didn't want to pull the really bright colours from it so we went for deeper, grounding tones,' says Dominique. Corfe 1515 CC-639 wallcovering, Tatiana Tafur. Dakota dining chairs, Julian Chichester

the house was a time capsule,' explains Mike Fisher, creative director and founder of interior design company Studio Indigo, who was commissioned to renovate this mid-terrace, Grade II-listed Georgian townhouse in London. 'It was like stepping back in time. The house hadn't been decorated since the 1940s – it even had a little bomb damage – with most of the original architectural features from the 1820s still evident.'

The owner, Nathalie Hirst, has a good eye when it comes to the important qualities in a house, according to Mike. 'She knows what she likes and doesn't like, what would add value to the property and what was important to make it feel like a very special house.'

Bringing the property into the 21st century necessitated planning permission, although Studio Indigo was limited in terms of the structural work that could be done because it is a listed building. 'The starting point was the rear extension and how we could make the closet wing at the back feel like it was much more part of the house,' says Mike.

The original form of the closet wing was retained but the ground floor was extended and opened up. The layout was reconfigured so that an open-plan space perfect for contemporary living, comprising the kitchen, sitting and dining areas, forms the convivial heart of the home. In addition, spaces were reworked to create en suite bathrooms that are modern 'but not so ultra modern that they are out of character with the house'.

The priority of Tyché McCaig, Studio Indigo's director and project architect, was to make the townhouse feel as large and generous as possible. This was done by opening up links between rooms and creating vistas and views from one space to the next and through to the garden. 'It feels like everything is on a miniature scale and it's perfect,' she notes.

Because it's part of a terrace of houses, Studio Indigo was also able to build on the approvals that were bestowed on neighbouring houses and so were able to reintroduce a light well at the front of the house to tease natural light into the basement.

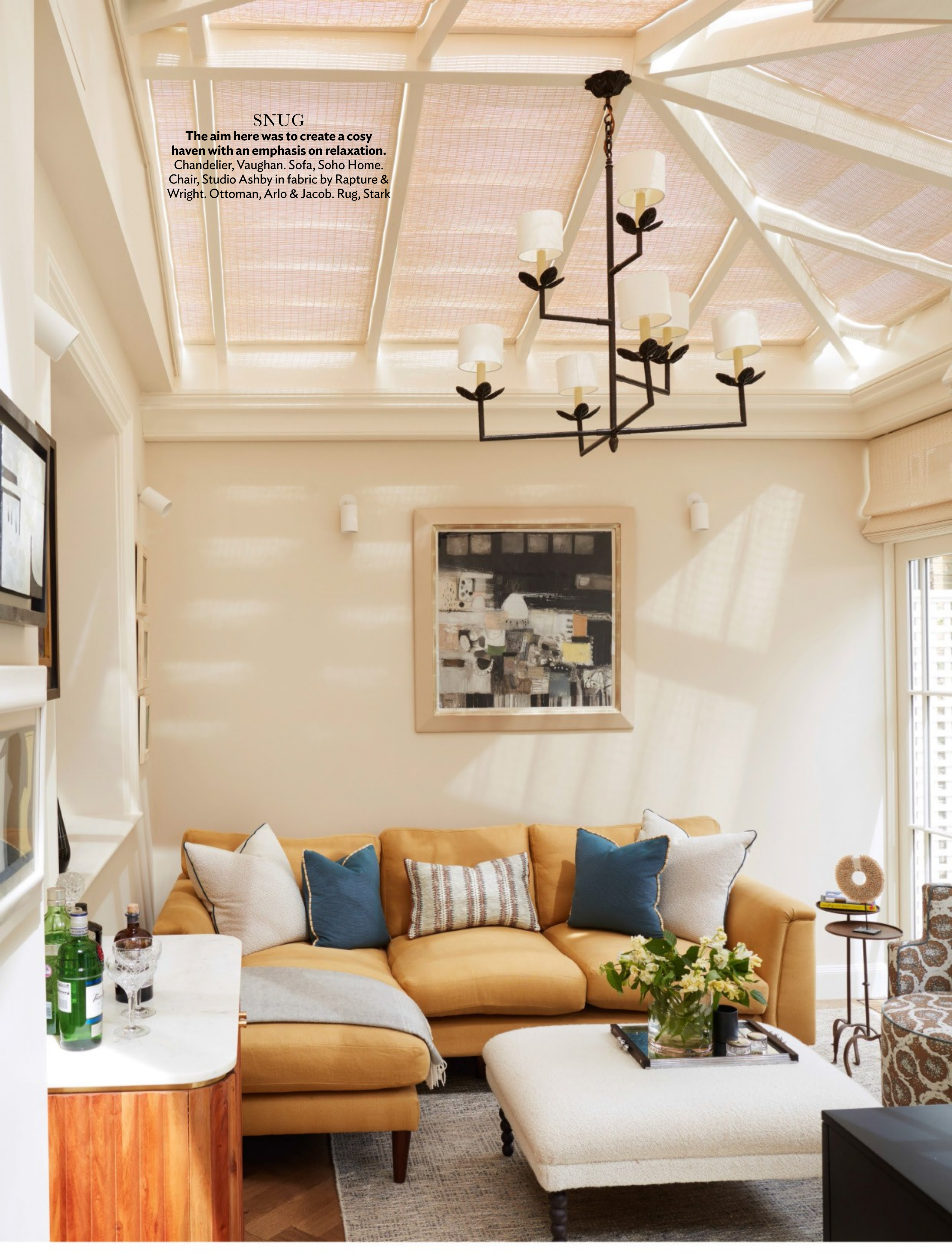
> 'We like to mix contemporary art and antique furniture in a nice dialogue between the past and the present'

Restoring and reinstating the original period details, such as panelling, cornices, skirtings, architraves and window shutters – essential elements that make up a listed house – was also a priority.

Having formed the basic bones of the house and the spaces, interior designer Dominique Bonino worked with Nathalie in terms of the aesthetics of the decor. 'We wanted to keep the colour palette fairly fresh and in keeping with its Georgian roots and then play with colours with the furniture and soft furnishings. Our aim was to create an inviting and cosy space that was functional for everyday living. Nathalie has a lot of heirloom pieces so we really wanted to make them sing in the spaces and have everything else complement them and her collection of art. Each room needed to feel like a true reflection of Nathalie, her travels and history.' A careful balancing act was performed regarding the choice of furniture, mixing and matching modern and traditional pieces, to keep the look timeless.

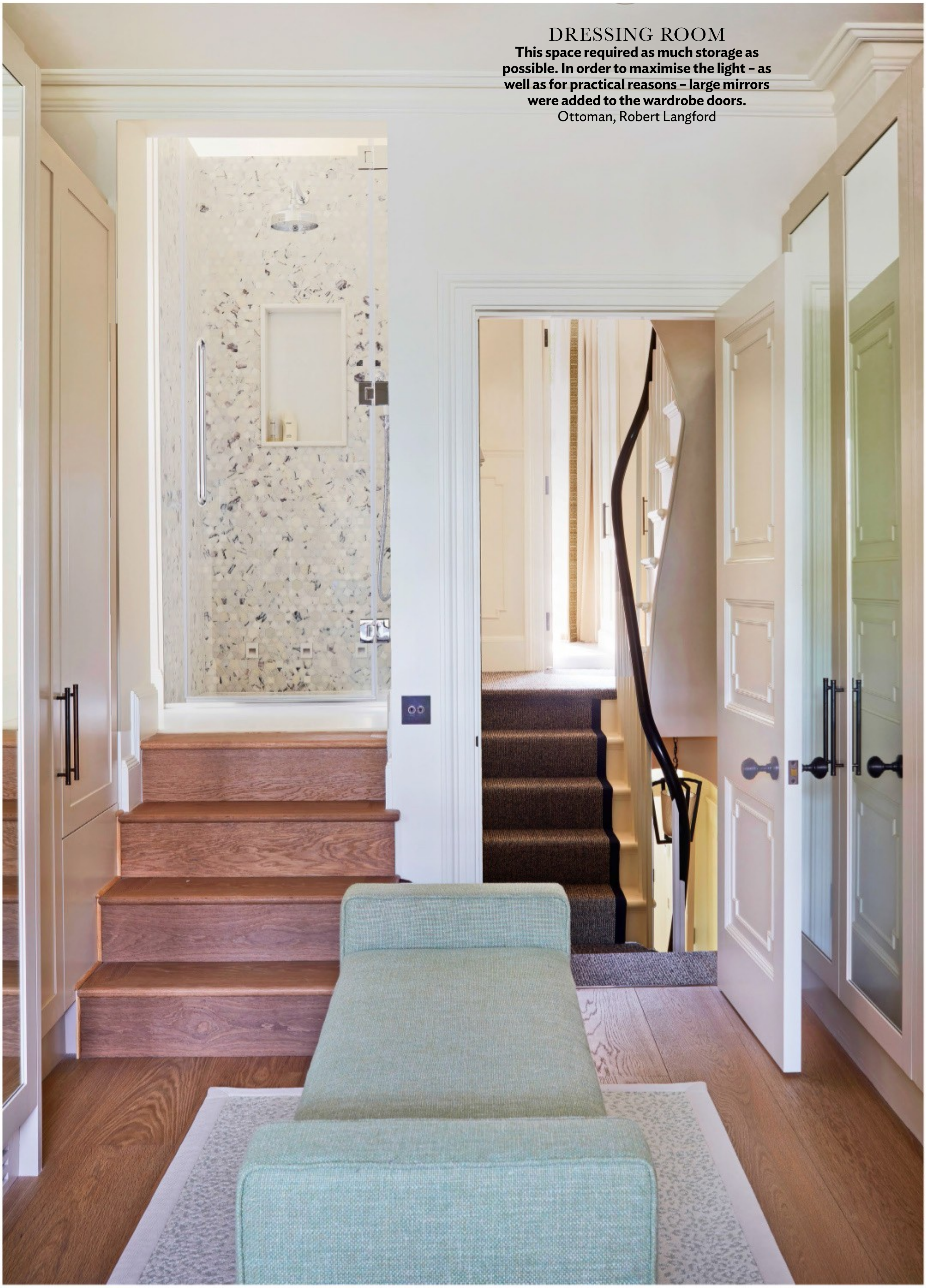
The result is a classic scheme that exudes light and is peppered with soft rustic and tonal hues of yellow, green, blues and ochres. 'We didn't want to incorporate particularly dark colours,' explains Dominique. 'We needed to keep the decor light but at the same time bring in beautiful fabrics and exquisite patterns so that it wouldn't feel bland. Nathalie knew where she wanted to introduce colour and pattern to give it character and she also wanted to have some fun along the way.'

studioindigo.co.uk; dominiquebonino.com



SNUG

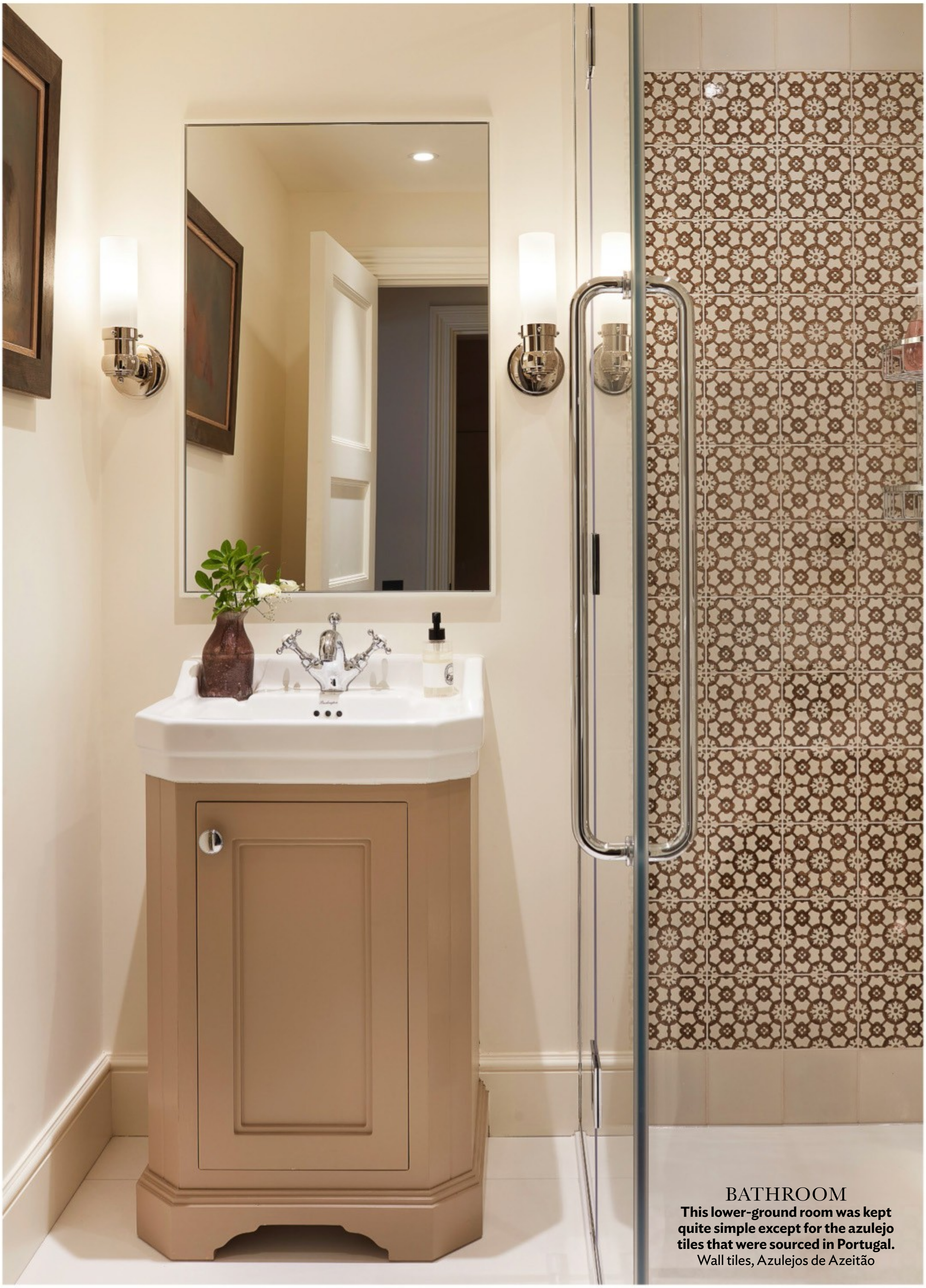
The aim here was to create a cosy haven with an emphasis on relaxation. Chandelier, Vaughan. Sofa, Soho Home. Chair, Studio Ashby in fabric by Rapture & Wright. Ottoman, Arlo & Jacob. Rug, Stark



DRESSING ROOM

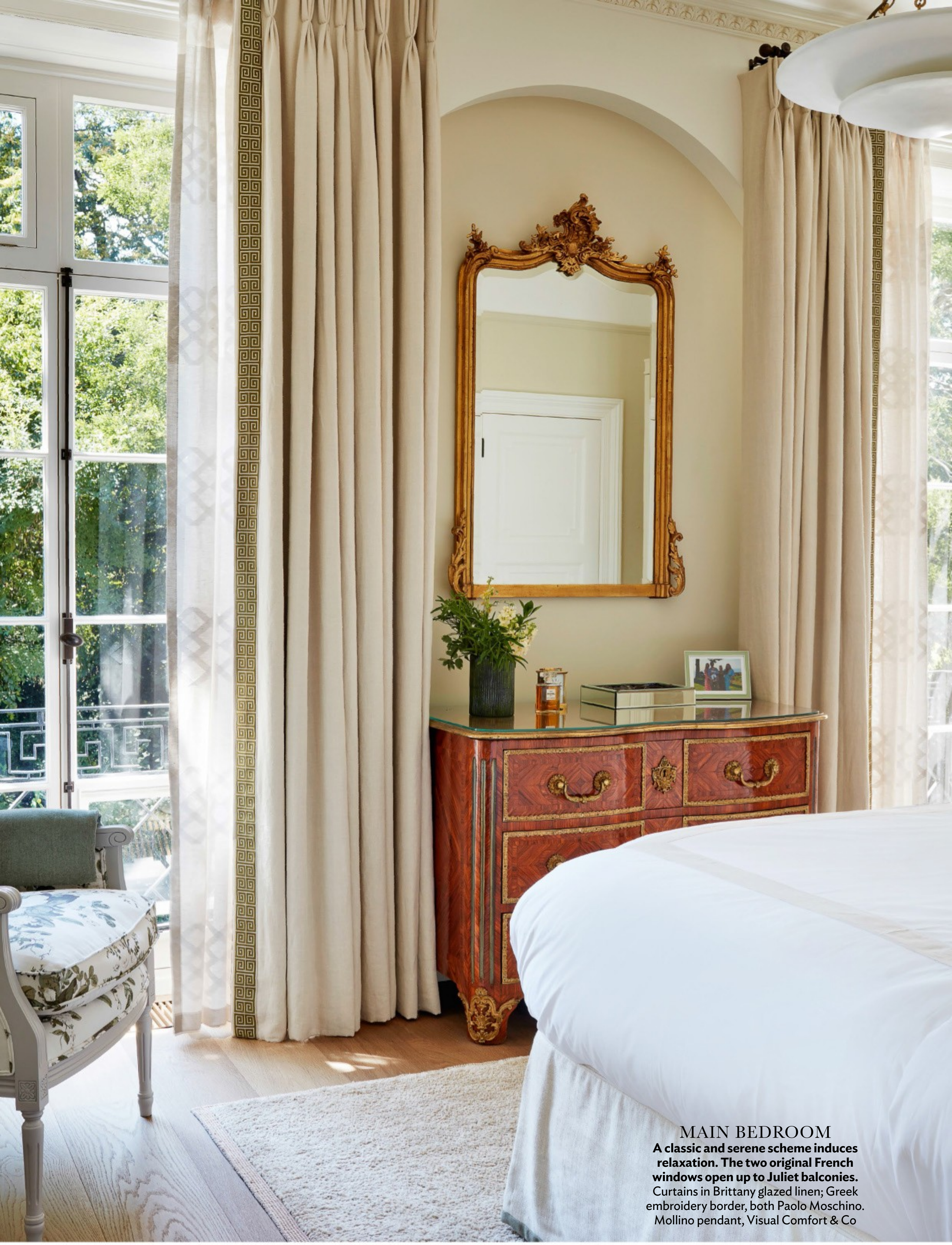
This space required as much storage as possible. In order to maximise the light – as well as for practical reasons – large mirrors were added to the wardrobe doors.

Ottoman, Robert Langford



BATHROOM

This lower-ground room was kept quite simple except for the azulejo tiles that were sourced in Portugal. Wall tiles, Azulejos de Azeitão



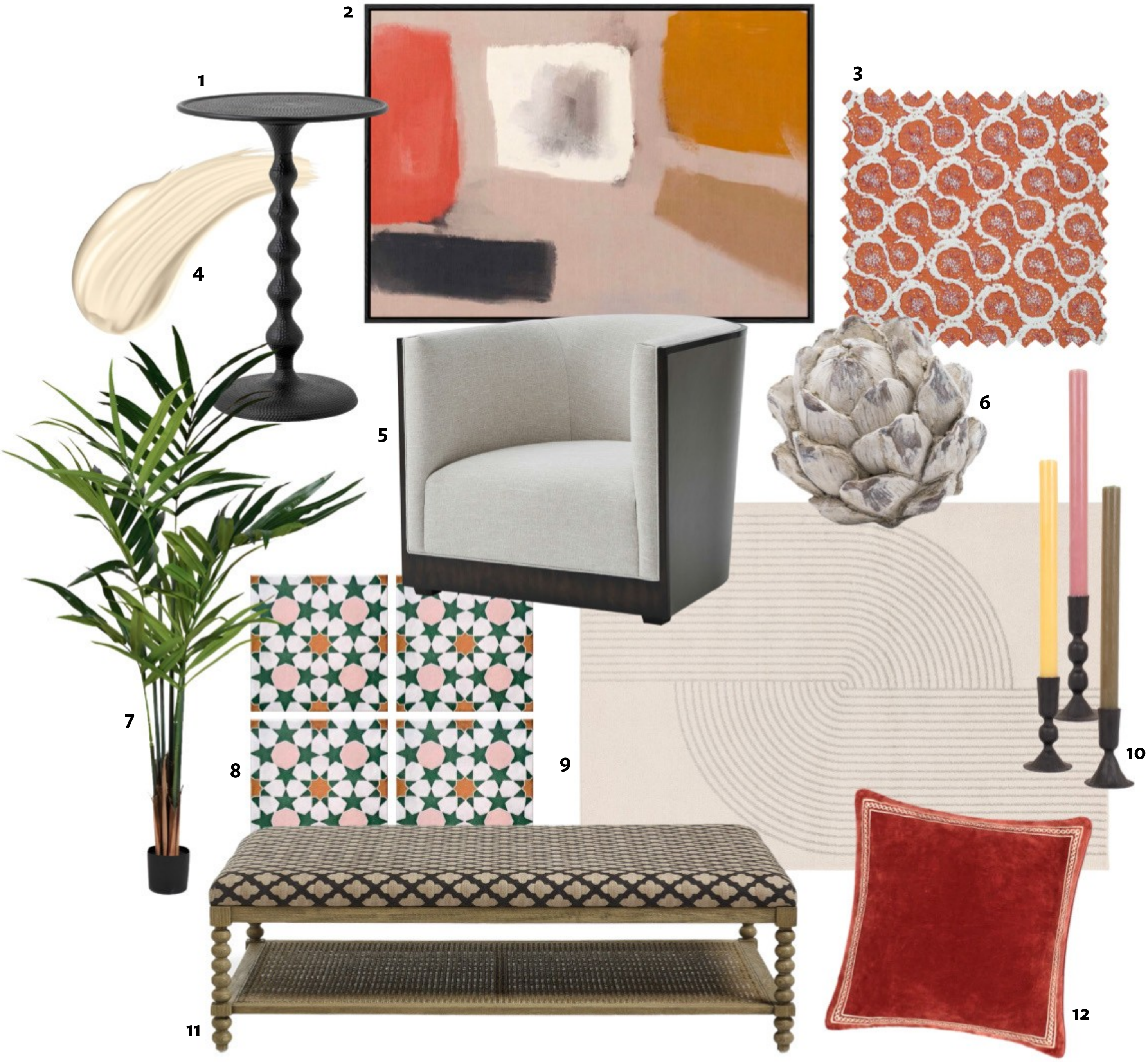
MAIN BEDROOM

A classic and serene scheme induces relaxation. The two original French windows open up to Juliet balconies. Curtains in Brittany glazed linen; Greek embroidery border, both Paolo Moschino. Mollino pendant, Visual Comfort & Co

GET THE
LOOK

STYLE *inspiration*

Modern and classic pieces meet in Nathalie's listed home for a timeless aesthetic that still feels fresh and contemporary



1 Bobbin Stem side table in Black, £245, Rose & Grey **2** Abstract Neutral Blush framed canvas, £179, Abstract House **3** Serendip fabric in Brick, £133m, Rapture & Wright **4** Mellow Neutral emulsion, £28 for 1ltr, YesColours **5** Garren tub armchair in Kendal Linen, £2,345, Ta Studio at Theodore Alexander **6** Ceramic glazed artichoke decoration, £11, The Wisteria Tree **7** Kentia faux palm tree, £220, Willow's Collection at Sweetpea & Willow **8** Agadir Tanane tiles in Green Gold, £65sq m, Your Tiles **9** Faye linear rug in Beige, £139, Cult **10** Austen candleholders in Black, from £10 each, Bohemia **11** Gwendolen coffee table in Serigraph Black/Natural, £1,295, Oka **12** Shisho embroidered velvet cushion in Carmine Red, £88, Birdie Fortescue

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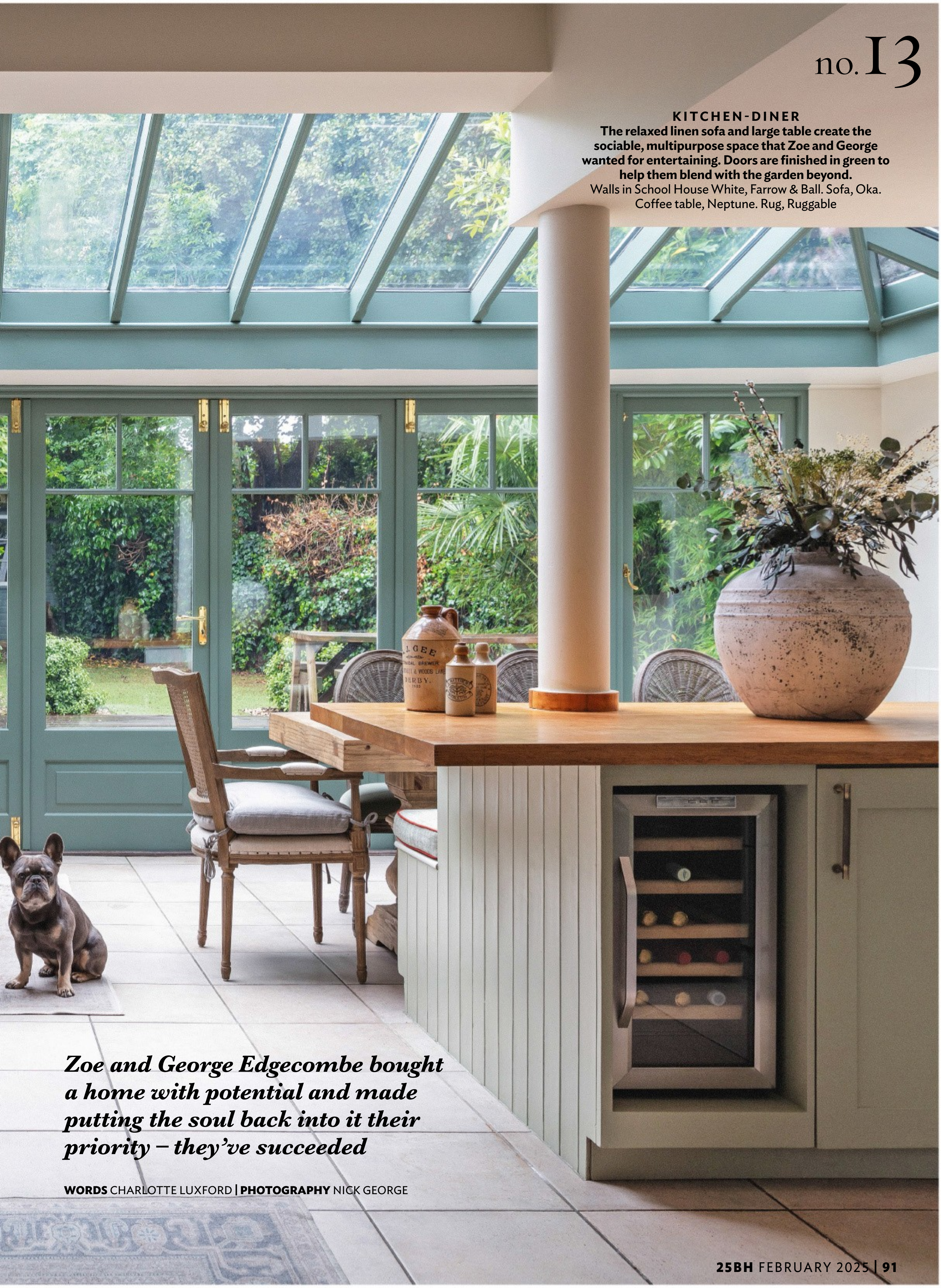
HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Detached Edwardian house

ROOMS
Entrance hall, study, sitting room, open-plan kitchen-diner, cloakroom, four bedrooms two bathrooms

LOCATION
Surrey

No place LIKE HOME



no.13

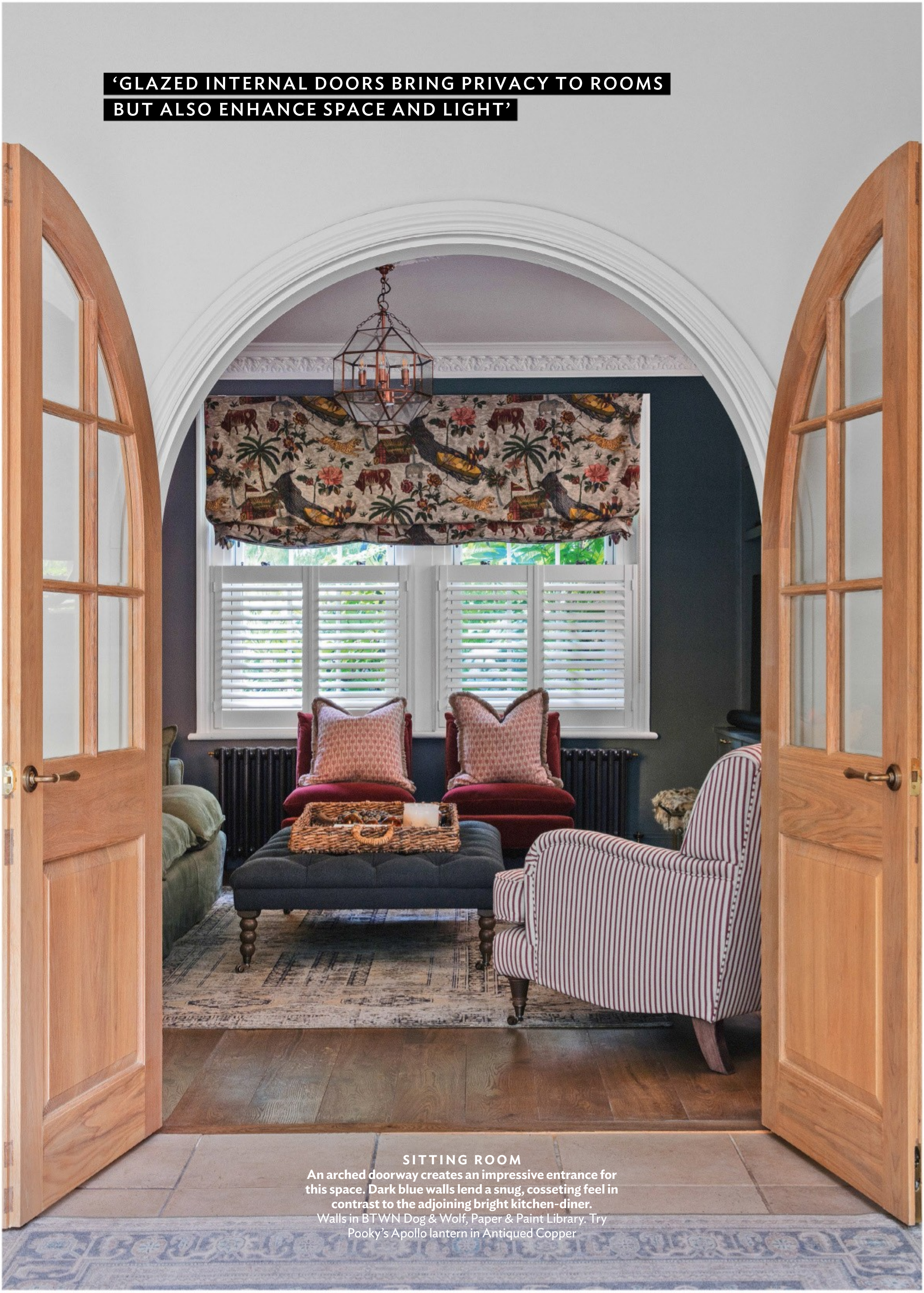
KITCHEN-DINER

The relaxed linen sofa and large table create the sociable, multipurpose space that Zoe and George wanted for entertaining. Doors are finished in green to help them blend with the garden beyond.
Walls in School House White, Farrow & Ball. Sofa, Oka. Coffee table, Neptune. Rug, Ruggable

Zoe and George Edgecombe bought a home with potential and made putting the soul back into it their priority – they've succeeded

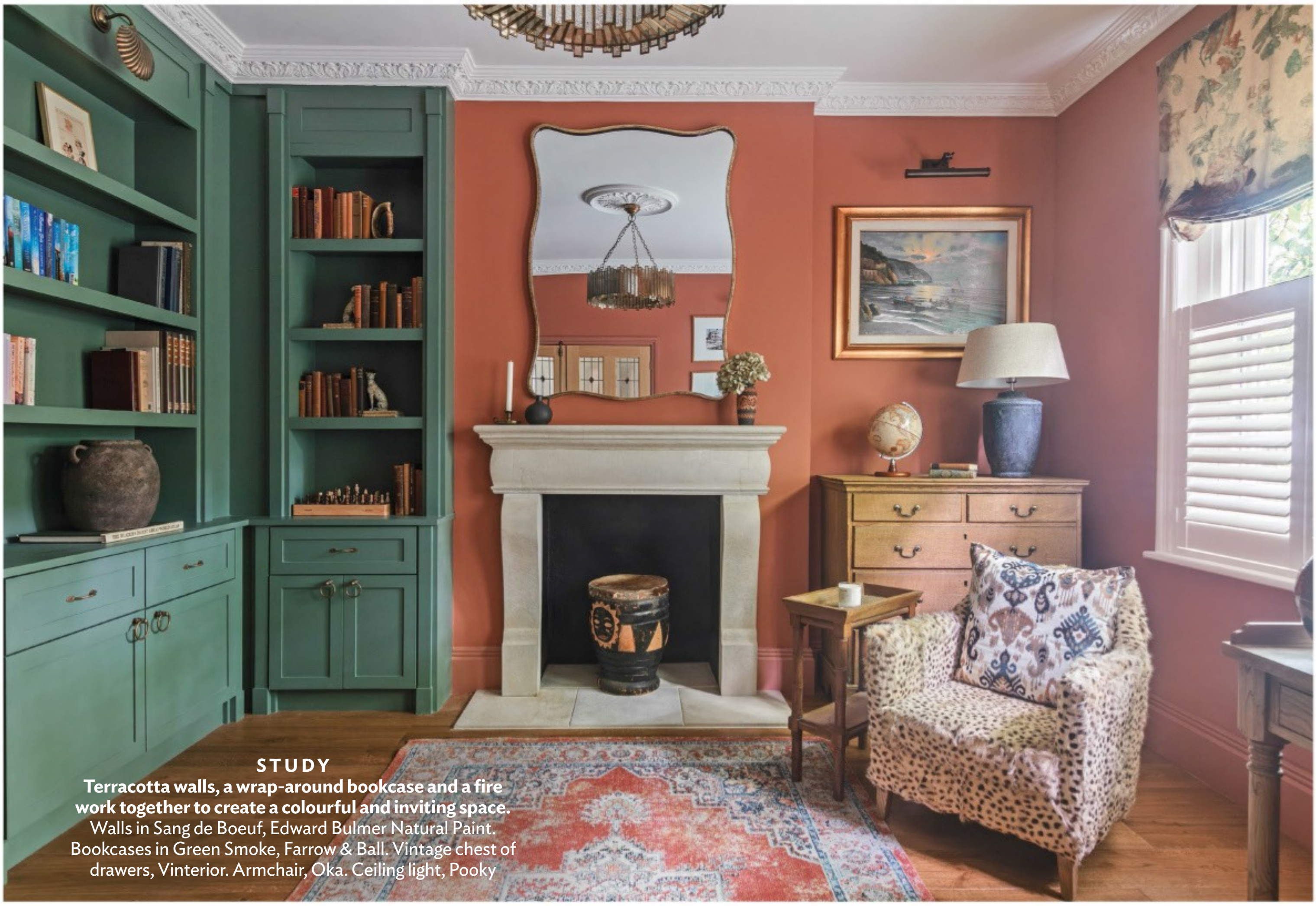
WORDS CHARLOTTE LUXFORD | **PHOTOGRAPHY** NICK GEORGE

‘GLAZED INTERNAL DOORS BRING PRIVACY TO ROOMS BUT ALSO ENHANCE SPACE AND LIGHT’



SITTING ROOM

An arched doorway creates an impressive entrance for this space. Dark blue walls lend a snug, cosseting feel in contrast to the adjoining bright kitchen-diner. Walls in BTWN Dog & Wolf, Paper & Paint Library. Try Pooky’s Apollo lantern in Antiqued Copper



STUDY

Terracotta walls, a wrap-around bookcase and a fire work together to create a colourful and inviting space. Walls in Sang de Boeuf, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint. Bookcases in Green Smoke, Farrow & Ball. Vintage chest of drawers, Vinterior. Armchair, Oka. Ceiling light, Pooky

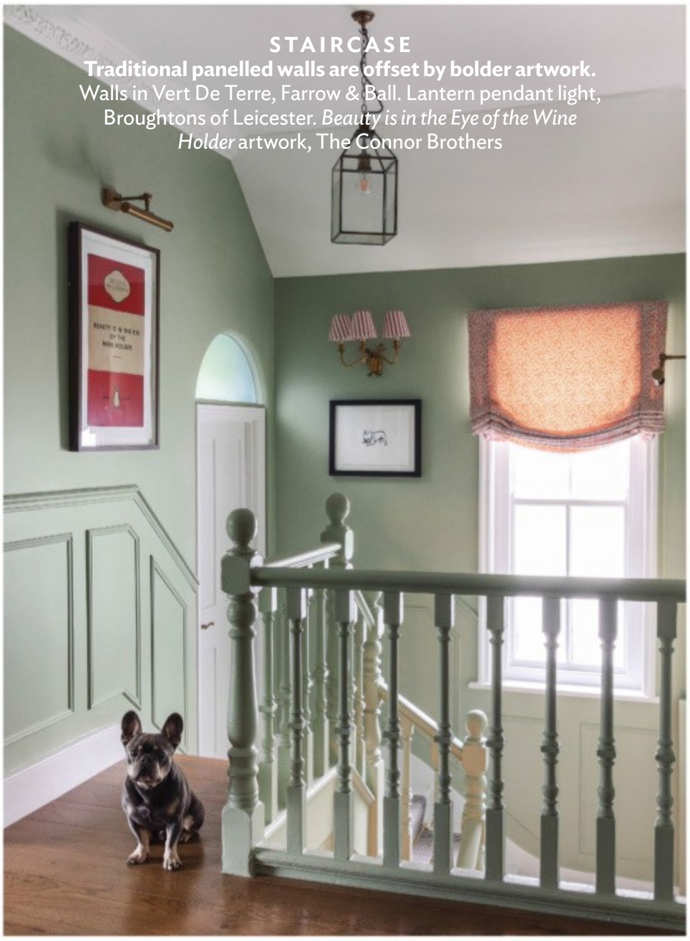
Just like any couple buying their first home, Zoe and George Edgecombe were excited by the prospect of living together in their dream property. The couple had come across a handsome double-fronted Edwardian house that needed work, but had plenty of potential. However, as busy investment bankers in their thirties, Zoe and George's careers were demanding most of their attention and nine months after moving in in early 2021, they had a bit of a reality check.

'It was close to the end of the year and we realised that if we didn't enlist a professional designer soon, life might get in the way of turning the house into the home we dreamed of,' admits Zoe. 'Though the property looked charming from the street, it felt very bare and not at all homely inside. We knew we'd need to start from scratch to bring soul back into the house.'

The brief was to create a warm and inviting home that melded classic charm with a sense of playfulness, inspired by country house hotels with a vibrant twist. 'We wanted our new house to feel like it was truly our own as opposed to living among a random assortment of things we'd inherited, which we didn't really like and definitely didn't reflect our style,' adds Zoe.

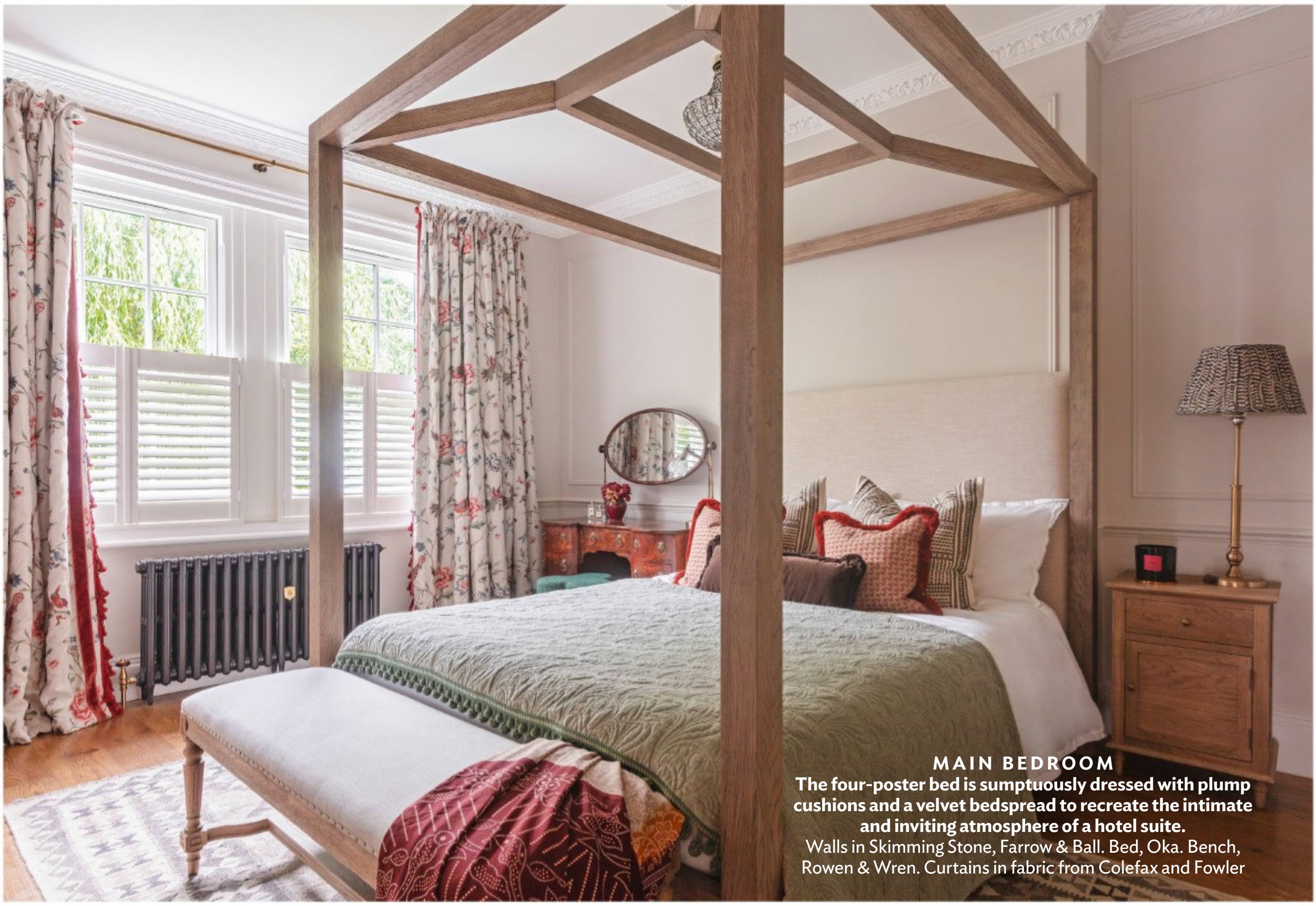
The couple admired interior designer Anouska Tamony and were keen to work with her to create a similar scheme to one of her past projects, while still putting their own stamp on it. After drawing up plans, work began in January 2023, kicking off with rewiring, replumbing and reglazing, as well as adding panelling, cornicing and fireplaces. Anouska also commissioned custom joinery to better accommodate their storage needs.

The biggest challenge was remodelling the main bathroom to squeeze in the free-standing bath and shower the couple



STAIRCASE

Traditional panelled walls are offset by bolder artwork. Walls in Vert De Terre, Farrow & Ball. Lantern pendant light, Broughtons of Leicester. *Beauty is in the Eye of the Wine Holder* artwork, The Connor Brothers



MAIN BEDROOM

The four-poster bed is sumptuously dressed with plump cushions and a velvet bedspread to recreate the intimate and inviting atmosphere of a hotel suite.

Walls in Skimming Stone, Farrow & Ball. Bed, Oka. Bench, Rowen & Wren. Curtains in fabric from Colefax and Fowler

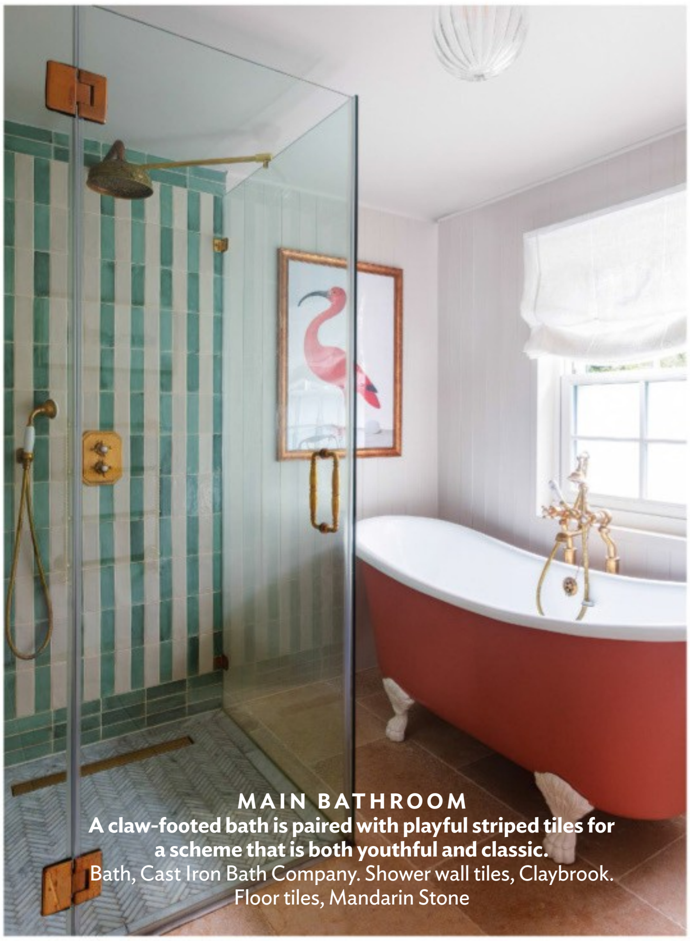
craved. 'The original bathroom had an awkward layout with a shower over the bath and ugly boxing encroaching into the room,' says Anouska. To resolve the issue, she lowered the floor to create additional ceiling height and repositioned the boiler to carve out space for a free-standing bath and spacious shower, transforming the cramped room into a more luxurious scheme.

After a speedy seven-month renovation, Zoe and George now have the cosy home they yearned for. Anouska opted for a rich palette of greens, blues and earthy reds with pops of vibrant hues to add a playful element of surprise. 'We love the fireplace in the sitting room with its wood-burning stove and furry fire fender; it makes the room super inviting on winter's evenings,' says Zoe. The arched doors into the sitting room, which were handmade by a family friend in Barnard Castle where Zoe grew up, also create the homely, nostalgic look they were after.

During the design process, the couple trawled flea markets and local galleries for unique finds to add the finishing touch to their home. 'In pride of place on the stairwell there's an ink drawing of our adorable French bulldog Rolo, denoting his place as head of the household,' laughs Zoe. Another ink drawing depicting a matador and bull hangs in the kitchen, which the couple discovered in Seville, while a Queen Anne-style dressing table the couple sourced sits in an alcove of the main bedroom.

'It was hard to feel relaxed in the house before, but now it's a pleasure coming home,' says Zoe. 'The house truly expresses our personalities and everything has been thoughtfully considered so everyday things feel easier, whether that's having a shower, making breakfast or doing the laundry – we're so happy here.' ㉕

anouskatamony.com

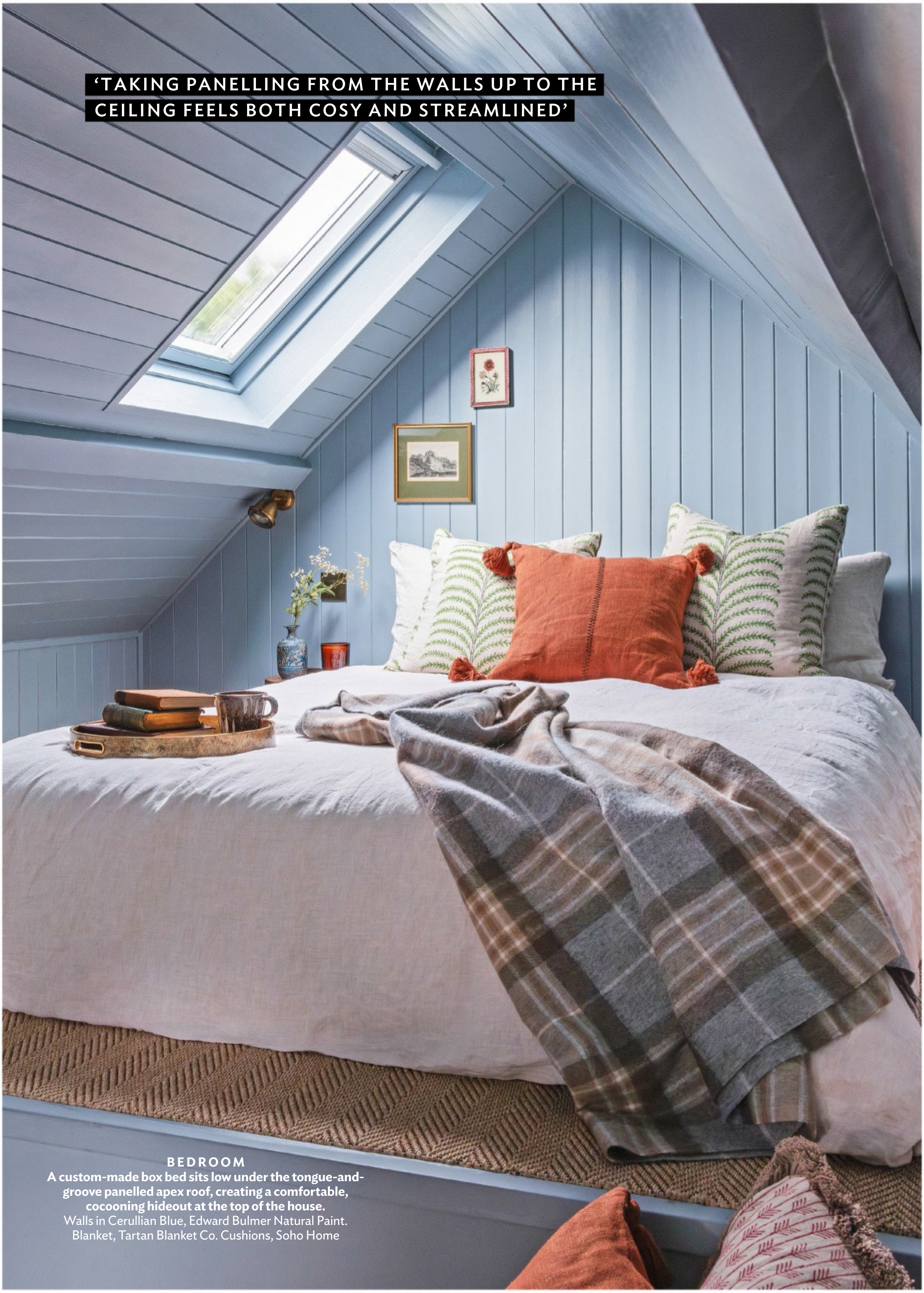


MAIN BATHROOM

A claw-footed bath is paired with playful striped tiles for a scheme that is both youthful and classic.

Bath, Cast Iron Bath Company. Shower wall tiles, Claybrook. Floor tiles, Mandarin Stone

‘TAKING PANELLING FROM THE WALLS UP TO THE CEILING FEELS BOTH COSY AND STREAMLINED’



BEDROOM

A custom-made box bed sits low under the tongue-and-groove panelled apex roof, creating a comfortable, cocooning hideout at the top of the house.
Walls in Cerullian Blue, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint. Blanket, Tartan Blanket Co. Cushions, Soho Home

Down to earth

João Botelho has infused his city home with a natural elegance using gorgeous materials and his love of green

WORDS JO BERRYMAN | **PHOTOGRAPHY** BÉNÉDICTE DRUMMOND

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
A converted 19th-century Methodist church

ROOMS
Kitchen-diner/living area, office, two bedrooms, bathroom

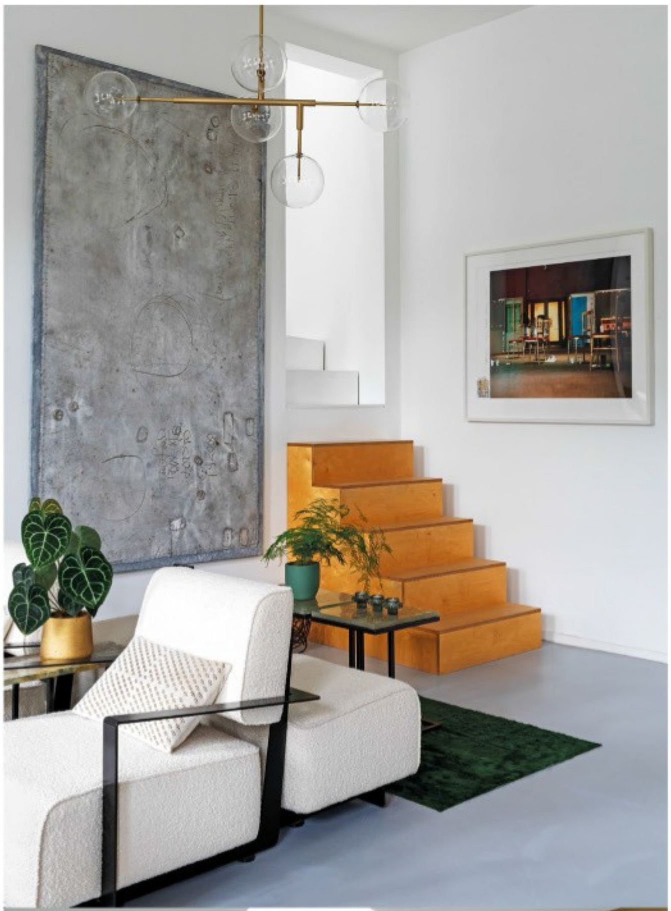
LOCATION
North London

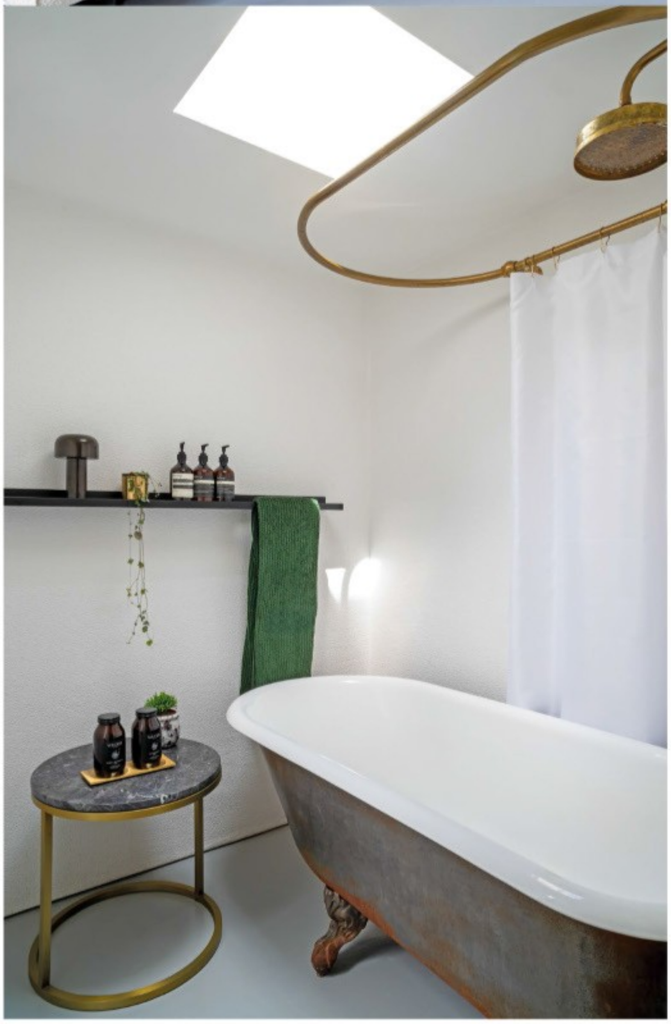
KITCHEN-DINER **Wall-to-wall bespoke cabinetry made from compressed MDF provides extensive storage while a circular mirror reflects the light coming in through the multiple arched windows. The steel staircase offers ample opportunity for plant hanging and creates shady pockets for ferns and statement planters. Carver dining chairs in chartreuse velvet pair beautifully with the ebony wood dining table and matching bench.** Floating strip light, Schwung. Artwork, Thomas Zanon-Larcher. Atena dining chairs; bench; dining table, all Casa Botelho

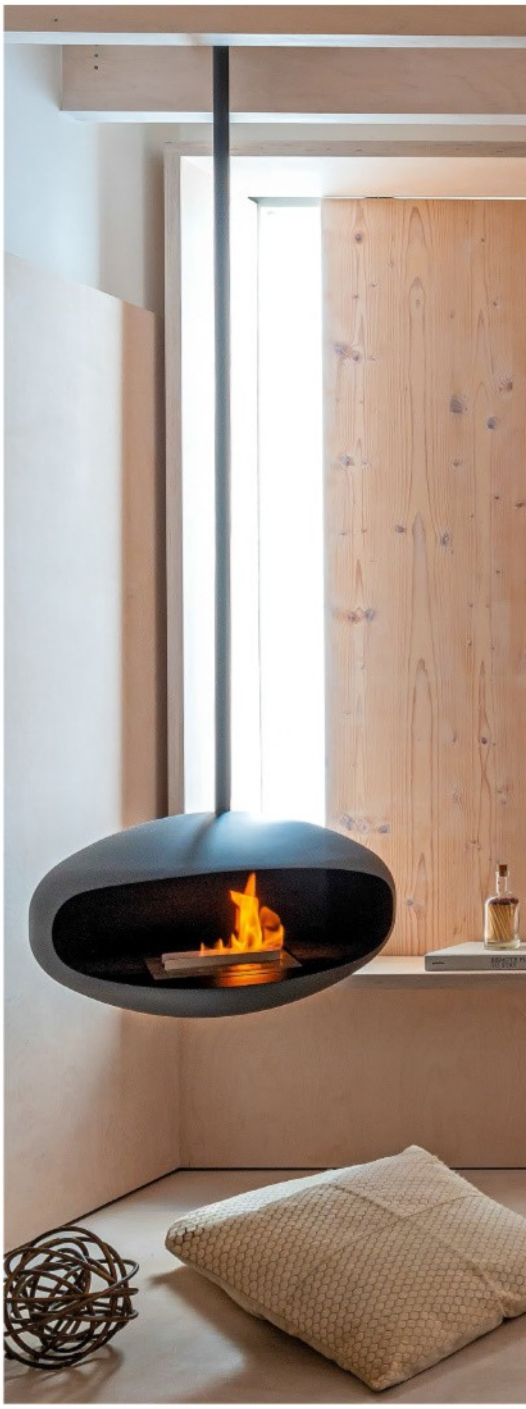
LIVING AREA **Deeply set and plush, the sofa is forged with brass detailing and upholstered in a rich mossy-hued boucle fabric. A bold circular rug defines this space.** Zeus sofa, Casa Botelho. Circular rug, Tapis Studio

Studio 3, formerly a 19th-century Methodist church in north London, is home to designer João Botelho and his beloved cocker spaniel Oscar. Following a separation, João was looking to downsize, but the hunt seemed fruitless until a fortuitous flurry of events led him to this property. It was love at first sight.

The conversion from ecclesiastical building to home was masterminded by West Architecture under the skilled guidance of Graham West and Hana Ichikawa. Their distinctive application of timber, steel, resin and brick forms the foundational palette. Split into two levels, the home comprises two bedrooms, an indulgent bathroom and an expansive open-plan living space. The soaring ceiling height



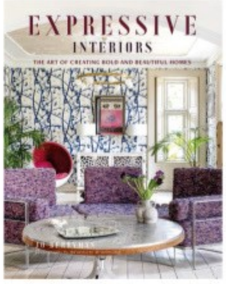




LIVING AREA
A striking armchair sits back to back with its matching footstool. This is the ideal viewing point for the contemplative abstract artwork. The staircase leads up to João's studio.
Armchair, Casa Botelho. Brass chandelier, Schwung. Abstract artwork, Manoel Bersan

BATHROOM
Simplicity is key here. The bath is positioned to allow a shower over it.
Similar brass oval shower curtain ring, Victorian Plumbing. Similar freestanding bath, Cast Iron Bath Company. Side table, Ruma, has this look

BEDROOM
Architectural and interior design elements join forces to create a serene space. The low-level bed is luxurious yet minimalist and the floating fireplace adds focal interest.
Artwork, Thomas Zanon-Larcher. Similar fireplace, Caleo



EXPRESSIVE
INTERIORS
THE ART OF CREATING BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL HOMES

Taken from *Expressive Interiors* by Jo Berryman; photography by Bénédicte Drummond (£25, Cico Books)

and classical arched windows exalt the main living space and drench it in plenty of natural light. A gravity-defying stairway with a sculptural silhouette connects the different levels and sets the architectural tone.

João has furnished the space with pieces from his own collection that echo the soft angles and streamlined curves of art deco yet wholeheartedly embrace the 21st century. His use of luxurious materials and richly hued fabrics balances the minimalist backdrop. Lighting by Schwung, home accessories dating back to his glamorous days working alongside Donna Karan in New York and an arresting art collection, infuse the space with a mood of culture, energy and elegance. João's love for green permeates the scheme,

> ‘João’s use of luxurious materials and richly hued fabrics balances the minimalist backdrop’

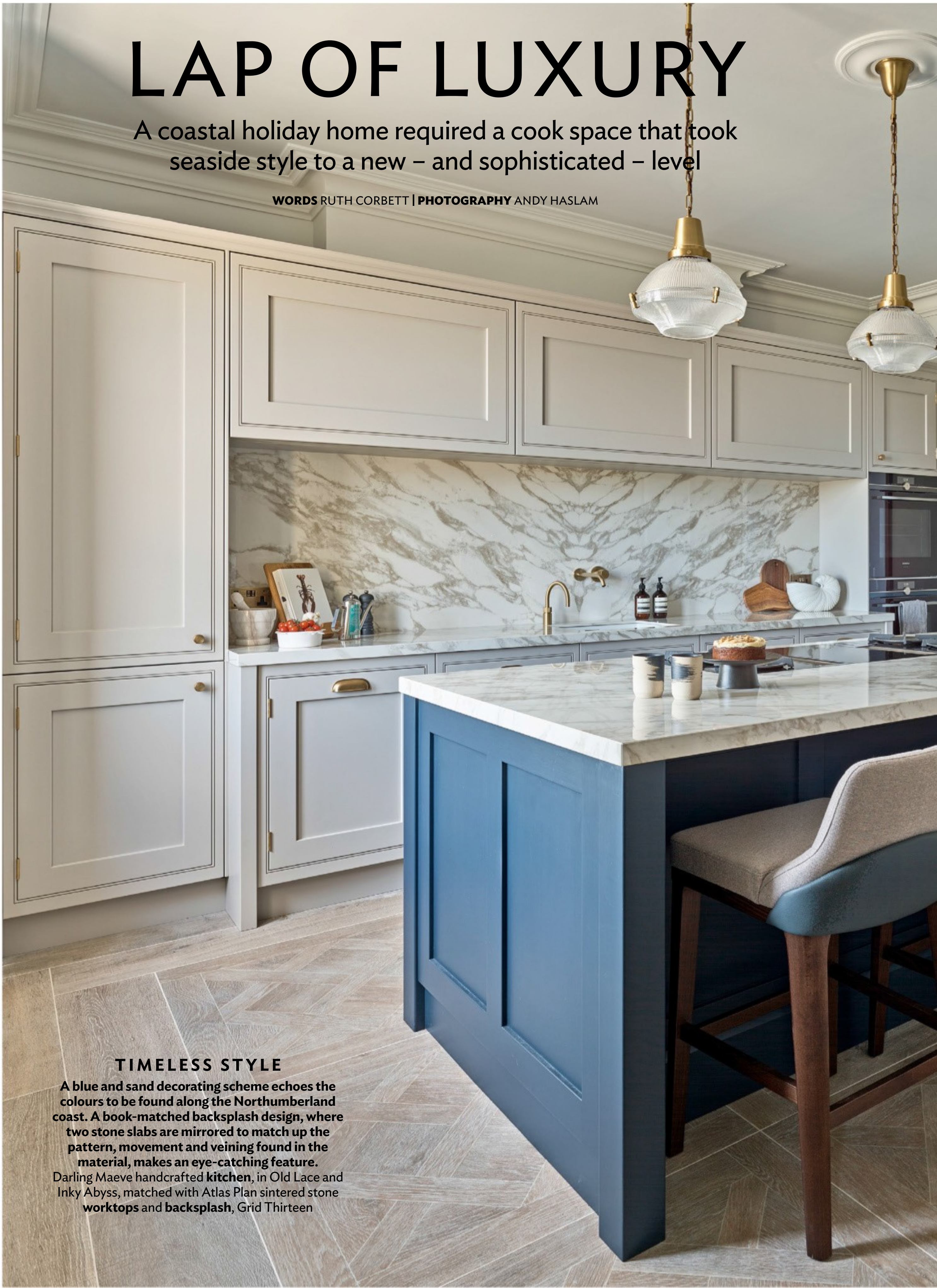
creating a harmonious backdrop that’s inspired by the lushness of the Amazon rainforest, testament to his Brazilian roots and zest for life. Lofty fig trees, frothy ferns, cascading climbers and a scattering of succulents offset the boucle, natural weaves and velvets in a spectrum of verdant shades.

The main bedroom, enveloped in a birchwood cocoon, is an ode to timber, soothing neutrals and a minimalist aesthetic. Black and white photography punctuates the scene. The low-level bed and clever blackout shutters ensure the deepest of sleeps. A floating fireplace serves as a monochrome centrepiece, its sleek, unobtrusive design fitting seamlessly into the pared-back decor, offering a source of warmth without disrupting the minimalist shell. The firelight casts subtle shadows against the backdrop, a flickering light play similar to that of an immersive art experience.

The bathroom is a continuation of the minimalist theme. A handsome claw-footed roll-top bathtub is positioned beneath a perfectly placed skylight, creating an idyll for relaxation and introspection. A melange of trinkets, potions, objets d’art and yet more greenery adorns the surfaces, adding a layer of sophistication.

Studio 3 is more than just a live/workspace. Here, João can conceive designs, develop ideas and showcase his stylish wares, all within an environment that not only fosters creativity but promotes tranquil living.

westarchitecture.co.uk



LAP OF LUXURY

A coastal holiday home required a cook space that took seaside style to a new – and sophisticated – level

WORDS RUTH CORBETT | **PHOTOGRAPHY** ANDY HASLAM

TIMELESS STYLE

A blue and sand decorating scheme echoes the colours to be found along the Northumberland coast. A book-matched backsplash design, where two stone slabs are mirrored to match up the pattern, movement and veining found in the material, makes an eye-catching feature. Darling Maeve handcrafted **kitchen**, in Old Lace and Inky Abyss, matched with Atlas Plan sintered stone **worktops** and **backsplash**, Grid Thirteen

no. 15

PROJECT DETAILS

DESIGNER
Emily Hicking,
Grid Thirteen
(gridthirteen.co.uk)

PROPERTY
A three-bedroom
Edwardian house

WORK
A new kitchen as part
of a wider renovation

LOCATION
Northumberland

The owners of this property, a professional couple with teenage sons, spend their downtime in the northeast, relaxing and enjoying sea sports, but they wanted their holiday home to have a new take on coastal style. Emily Hicking at Grid Thirteen was tasked with the project.

1 CONTEMPORARY ELEGANCE

Keen to avoid the formulaic coastal design norm, the couple were drawn to the sleek, contemporary style on offer at Grid Thirteen. Designer Emily Hicking was asked to create a new kitchen, bar area, boot room, utility room and dog shower room. 'My clients wanted the main kitchen space to be elegant yet timeless, while remaining cosy and welcoming,' says Emily. 'The design spans multiple spaces, for everyday use, of course, but also for the unique demands of coastal living, and since the property is so close to the beach, they were keen to explore how to incorporate a subtle nautical theme.'

2 BRINGING IN THE LIGHT

The once dark and awkwardly planned kitchen had high ceilings and large sash windows in its favour, and lent itself to bespoke, handcrafted cabinetry and design details to enhance its existing original features. 'A new layout was crucial to achieve the right balance of practicality and a relaxed aesthetic,' says Emily. With a big, multigenerational family and many visiting friends, the onus was on organisation, with carefully considered storage solutions a must. Extra deep drawers and wall cabinets offering increased capacity were employed to address this, without the furniture ever feeling overpowering.

3 SET IN STONE

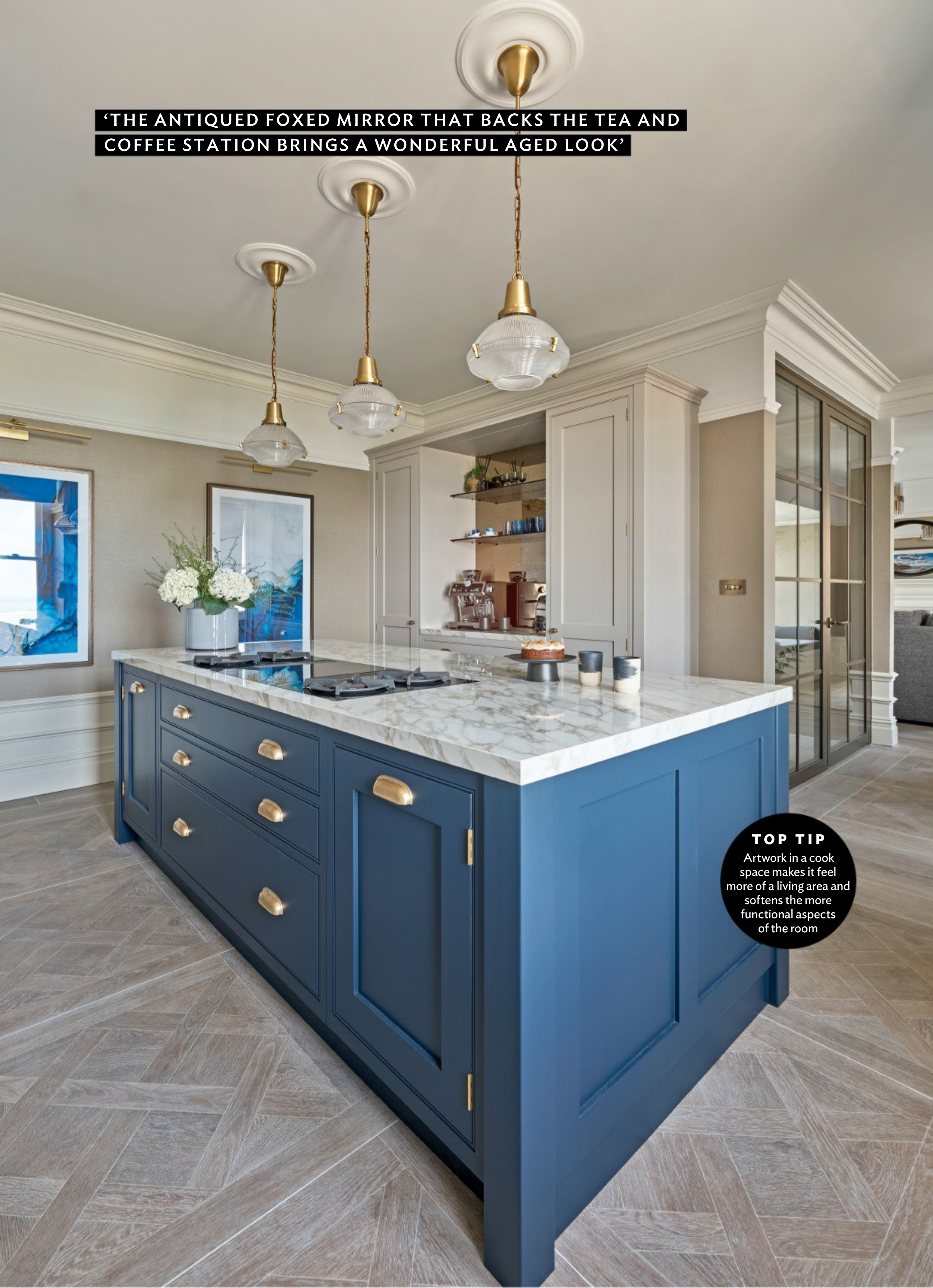
Stone worktops were fitted throughout the design, as well as a striking book-matched marble backsplash along the sink run. This draws the eye and lends sophistication to the space, creating a distinctive focal point between the cabinets. 'The soft shades and organic sense of movement within the piece creates some drama and reflects the rugged, slow-paced outside environment,' says Emily.

4 SEASIDE STYLE

Addressing her client's wish for some subtle seaside touches, a colour scheme of easy blues and greys hits the mark, while artworks with coastal themes are playful rather than clichéd. 'My clients are also keen cooks who enjoy entertaining, so high-performance appliances were integral to the kitchen space.'

CLEVER USE OF SPACE

A new layout ensures the large island has plenty of 'walk-round' room, while extra deep, custom-made drawers and units provide ample storage. Original Edwardian features such as the decorative high skirting boards and attractive cornicing have been carefully preserved. **Appliances**, Siemens and Miele. Bora **hob** and **extraction**; **boiling water tap**, all Quooker. Brass brimmed dome **pendant lights**, Soho Lighting. **Coffee machine**, De'Longhi. Parquet-effect porcelain **flooring**, Mandarin Stone



‘THE ANTIQUED FOXED MIRROR THAT BACKS THE TEA AND COFFEE STATION BRINGS A WONDERFUL AGED LOOK’

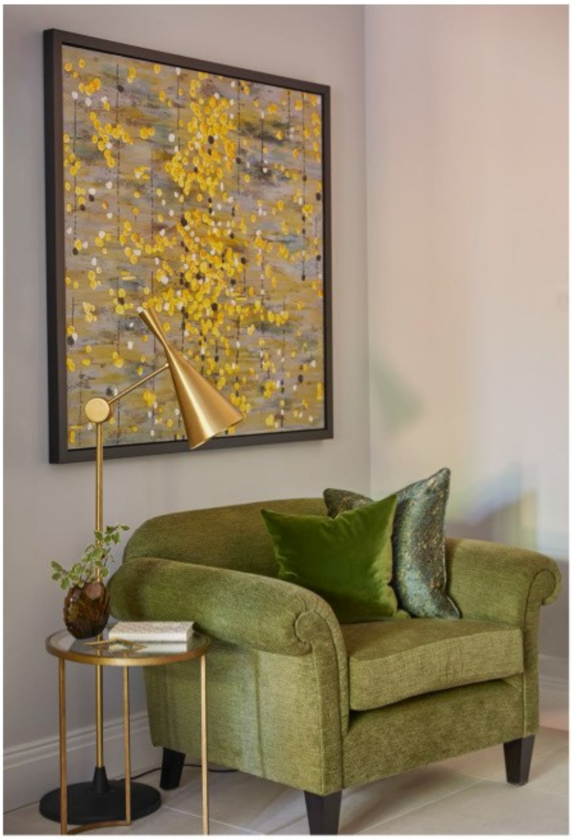
TOP TIP

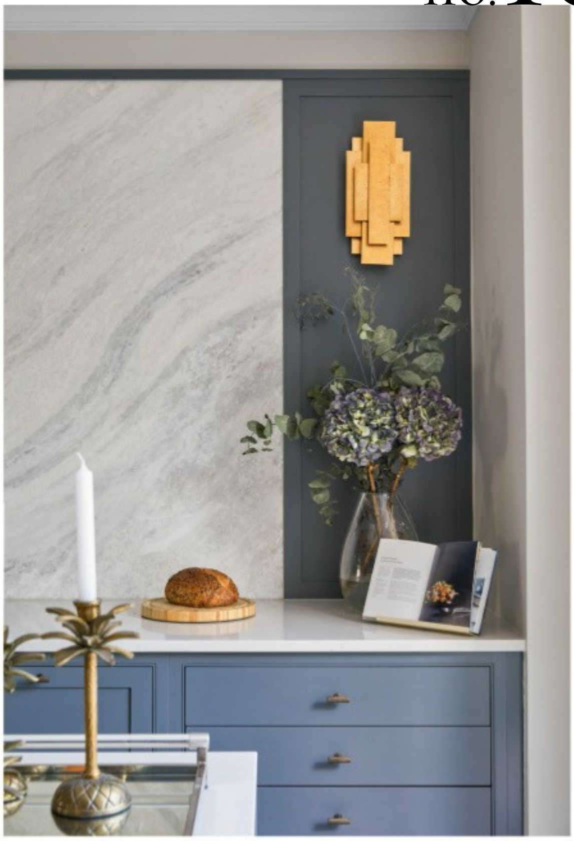
Artwork in a cook space makes it feel more of a living area and softens the more functional aspects of the room

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Luxurious gold accents and swathes of saturated colour have allowed interior designer Sara Cosgrove to turn the glamour dial up in this new-build Irish home

WORDS KAREN WILSON | **PHOTOGRAPHY** HELEN CATHCART



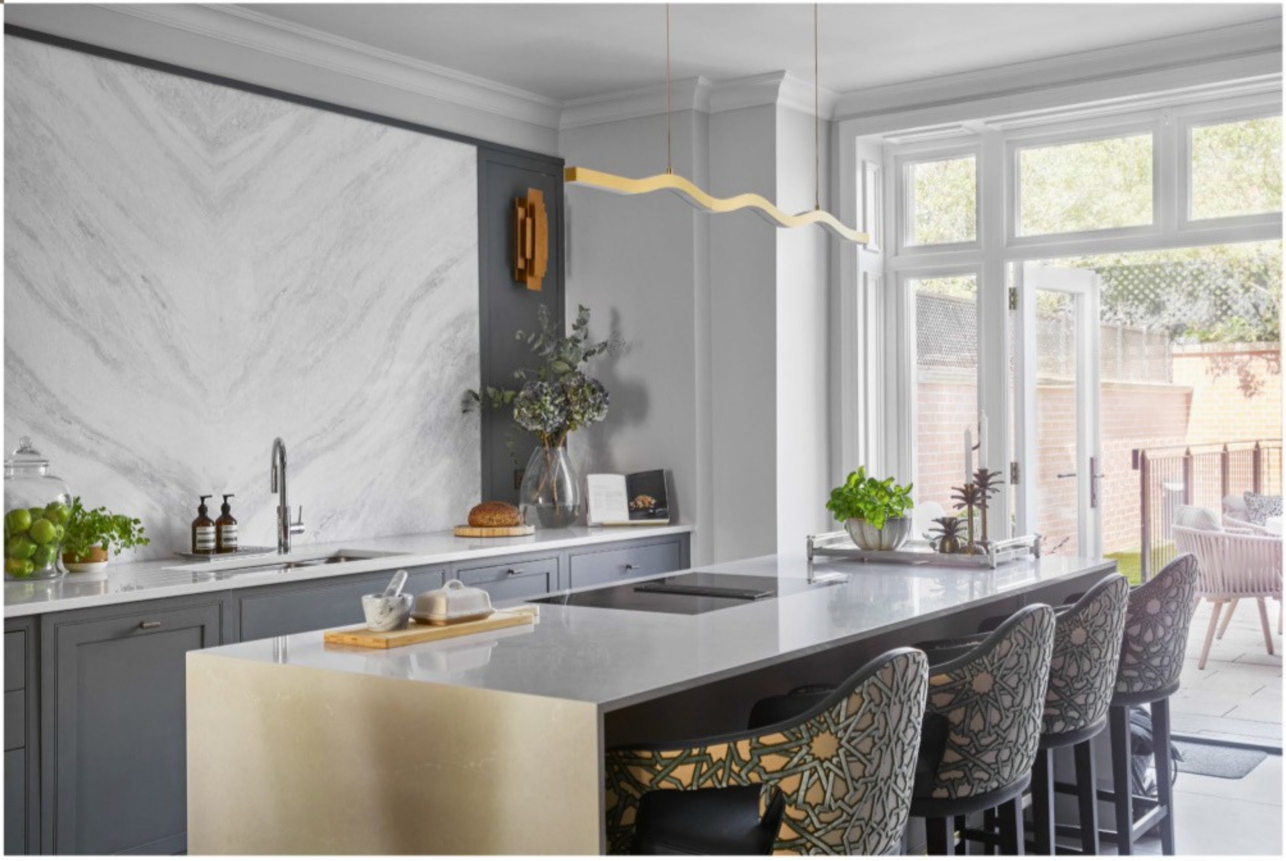


DINING AREA

A glass-topped table bounces light around the room. Capricorn dining table; dining chairs, Tom Faulkner. Larger Oldfield chandelier, Pooky, has a similar style. Lucerne armchair, Kingcome Sofas, is similar. Try Gallery Interiors Hudson side table, Olivia's, and Beat table lamp, Tom Dixon. Artwork, from the couple's collection

KITCHEN

Not taking the large marble splashback from wall to wall gives the appearance of a framed piece of art. Kitchen, Rhatigan & Hick; painted in Scree, Little Greene. Fleece Line pendant, Kaia. Antwerp Art Deco wall light, Tiffany Lighting Direct. Try Laura Ashley Antique Brass Large Palm Tree candlestick, The Light Company



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Four-storey, new-build terraced home

ROOMS
Kitchen-diner/sitting room, drawing room, cinema room/gym, four bedrooms, five bathrooms

LOCATION
Dublin

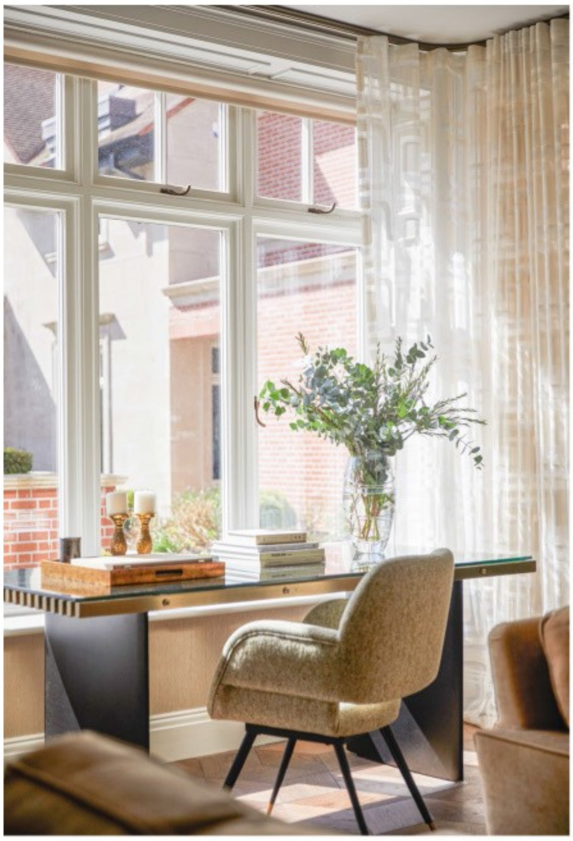
WHAT DREW YOUR CLIENTS TO THIS PROPERTY? They are a young family who relocated from a penthouse apartment overseas in 2023. This Dublin townhouse gave them a more traditional layout with garden space in a beautiful area. It had the fabulous classical features they wanted, but as a new build it also features a lift and ample underground parking.

HOW DID YOU COME TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT? The client had seen our work and knew we would be able to respond to their needs and deliver a stunning family home. We were also open to working with their much-loved existing lighting pieces and bold, funky art and photography from upcoming artists.

HOW INVOLVED WERE THE HOMEOWNERS? They had clear ideas of what they liked and did not like, letting us get on with the work of pulling it all together. Their experience working on other projects meant they really understood the process and were an absolute dream to work with.

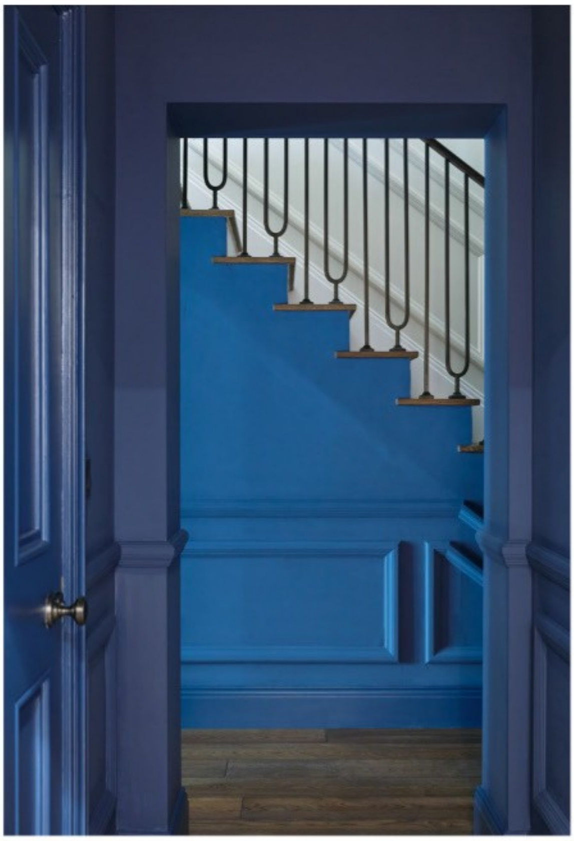
WHAT WERE THEIR BIGGEST PRIORITIES? That their home would be comfortable and welcoming with a bit of glamour, as well as reflecting their personalities. They really championed quality individual pieces and enabled us to create bespoke furniture, such as the beautiful bar stools and the extensive joinery. Storage was critical throughout, so we used every opportunity, such as creating alcove nooks and additional shelving.

WAS THE LAYOUT RECONFIGURED? We completely altered the main bedroom suite to



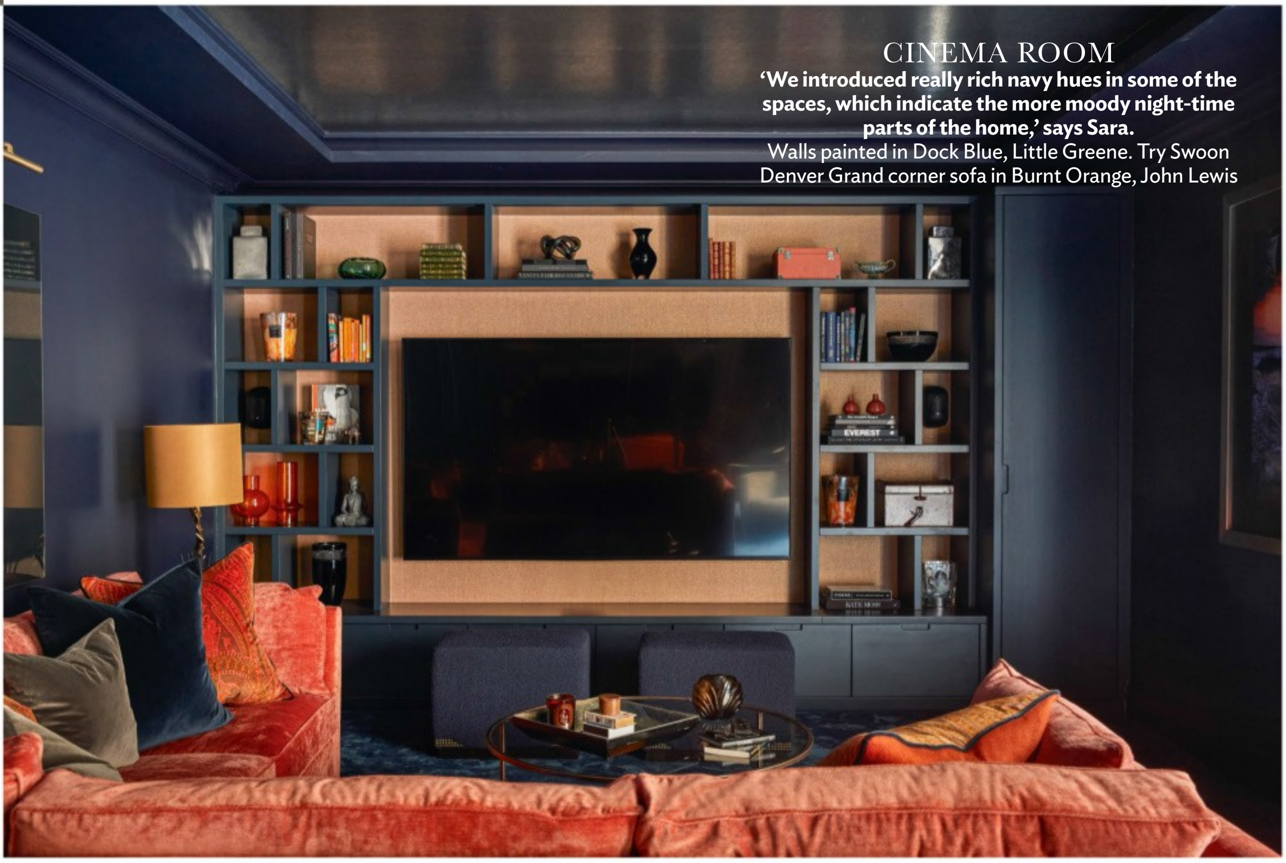
DRAWING ROOM

This charming space decorated in shades of taupe and green includes a desk area in the bay window.
Giacometti coffee table, Porta Romana. Tracery rug by Kelly Wearstler, The Rug Company. Cabinetry painted in Sage Green, Little Greene. Try Epoca Lampadari 12-light chandelier, Artemest. Desk and chair, Julian Chichester



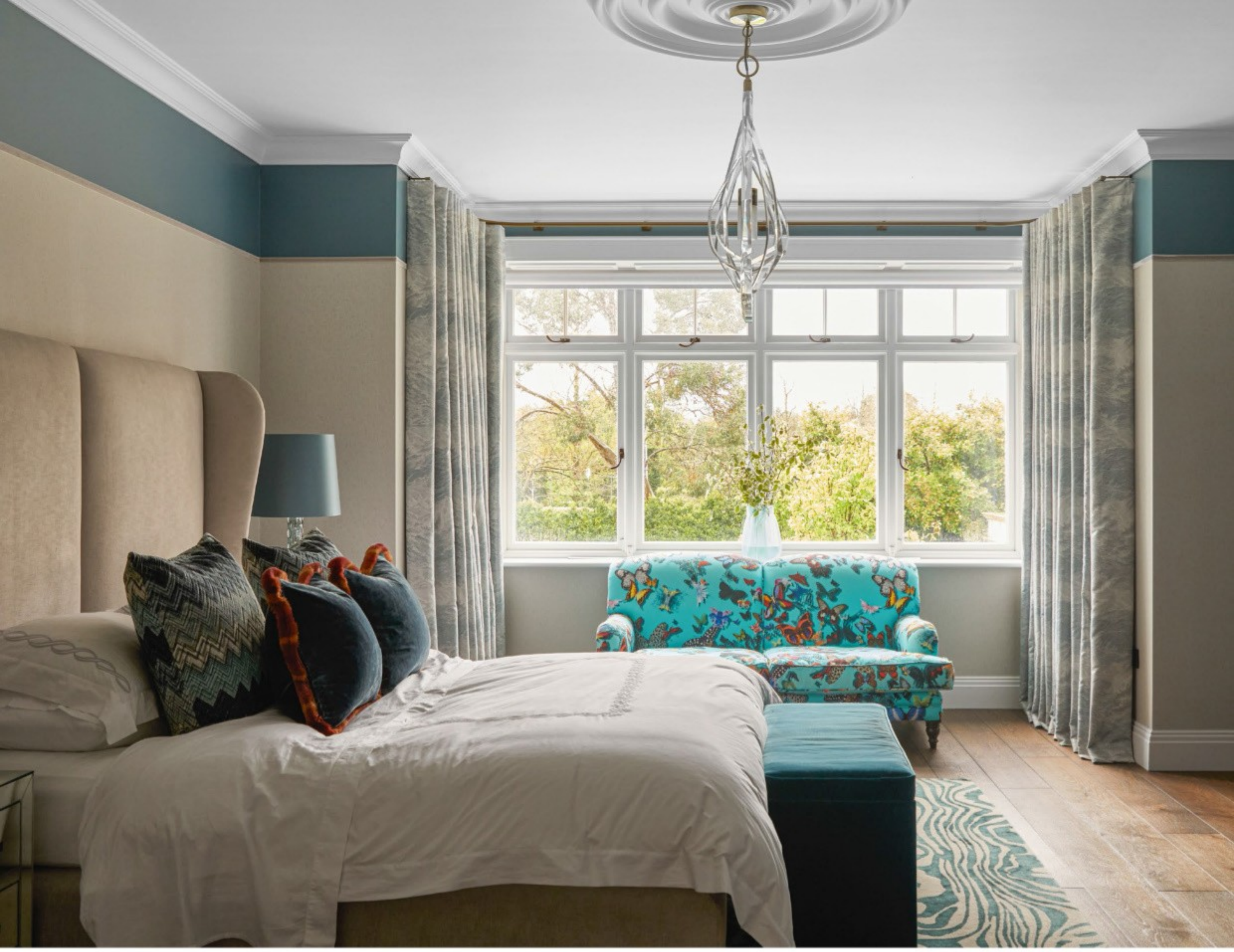
HALLWAY

Guests are drawn in from the outside with an enveloping dark blue before the paint colour switches to a lighter shade on the upper floors.
Hallway walls painted in Stiffkey Blue, Farrow & Ball



CINEMA ROOM

‘We introduced really rich navy hues in some of the spaces, which indicate the more moody night-time parts of the home,’ says Sara.
Walls painted in Dock Blue, Little Greene. Try Swoon Denver Grand corner sofa in Burnt Orange, John Lewis



‘The homeowners are down-to-earth yet glam and this is perfectly reflected in their home – they love saturated colour and weren’t afraid to have fun’

incorporate a dressing room and double the size of the main bathroom. It really improved the overall flow of the first floor and added value without compromising the rest of the building.

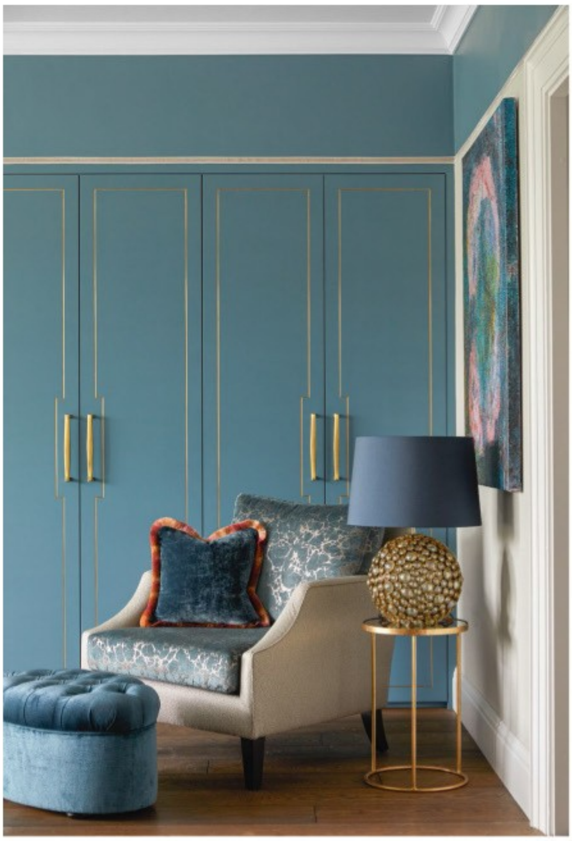
WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE SCHEME? The client, who had such a cool style. This enabled us to be bold and forthright in our proposals for her. The beautiful tumbled block timber flooring is a perfect example of taking a traditional element and turning the dial.

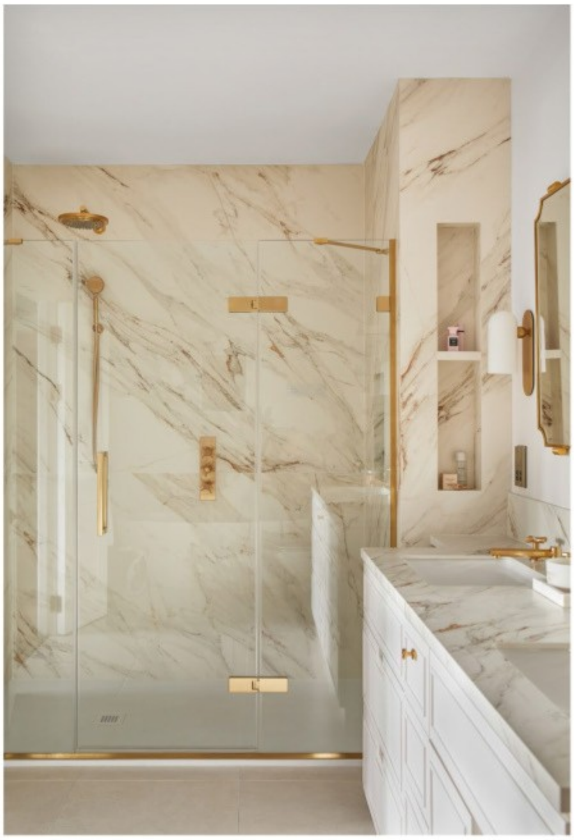
HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE COLOUR PALETTE? The client already had a palette of existing colours that she loved and we worked with her to take it up to the next level. She wasn’t afraid to use moody and darker colours and contrast them with bright metallics and bold accent colours.

ARE THERE ANY THREADS THAT RUN THROUGHOUT? We created flow and cohesion by bringing the smoked oak flooring throughout the home and using our favourite Portland Stone paint finish from Little Greene in most of the communal areas. This provided a simple palette that worked well with all of our other colour schemes.

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL SCHEME? It is about harmony between the designer and the client, understanding from the beginning the goals of the interior and who is going to be spending time there and when. From the get-go they let us know they were open to colour, texture and pattern so we could present them with interesting materials, furniture pieces and fabrics. ㉕

saracosgrove.com



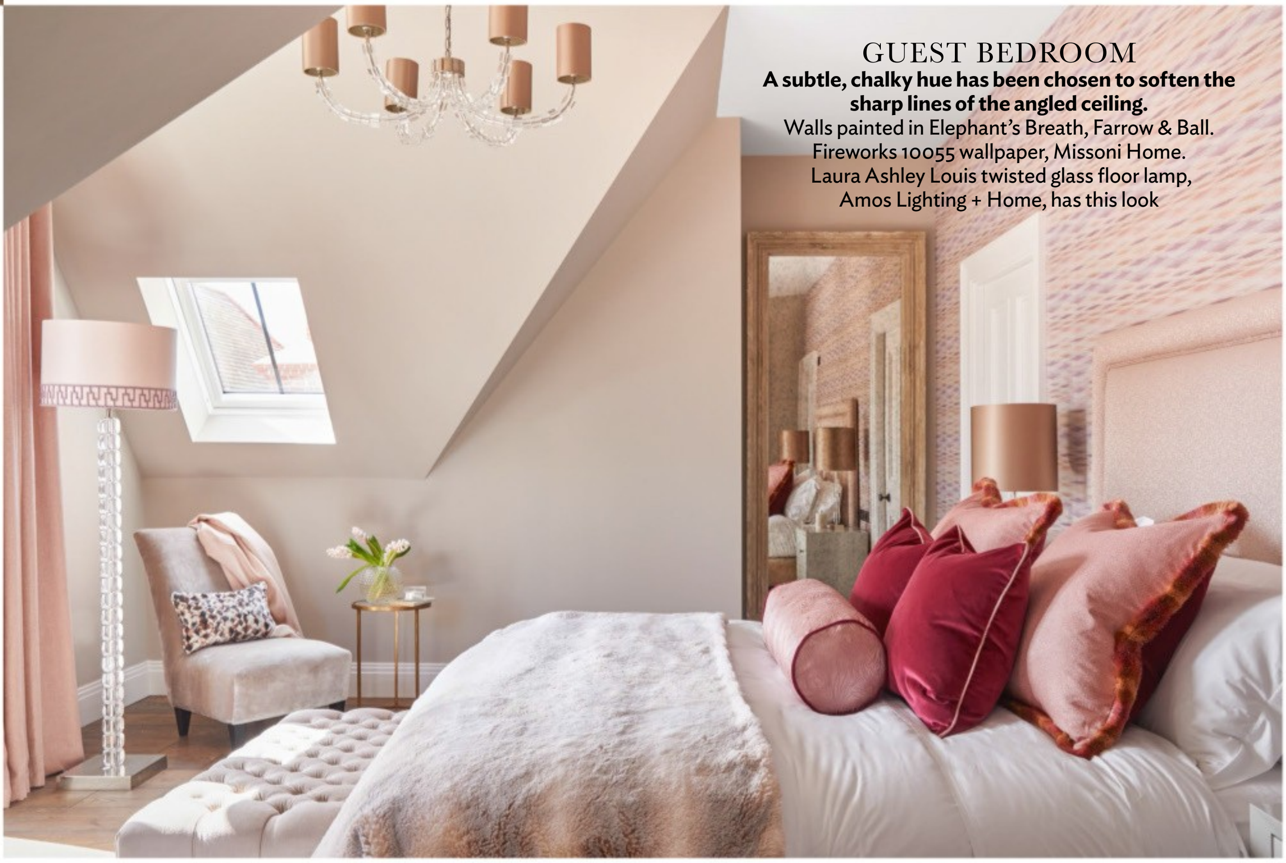


MAIN BEDROOM

The couple's much-loved sofa has been worked into the scheme, providing a punchy hit of colour.
Sofa in Butterfly Parade by Christian Lacroix, Designers Guild. Try Rye bed, Darlings of Chelsea. Anemone table lamp (above), Best & Lloyd. Wardrobes painted in Etruria, Little Greene

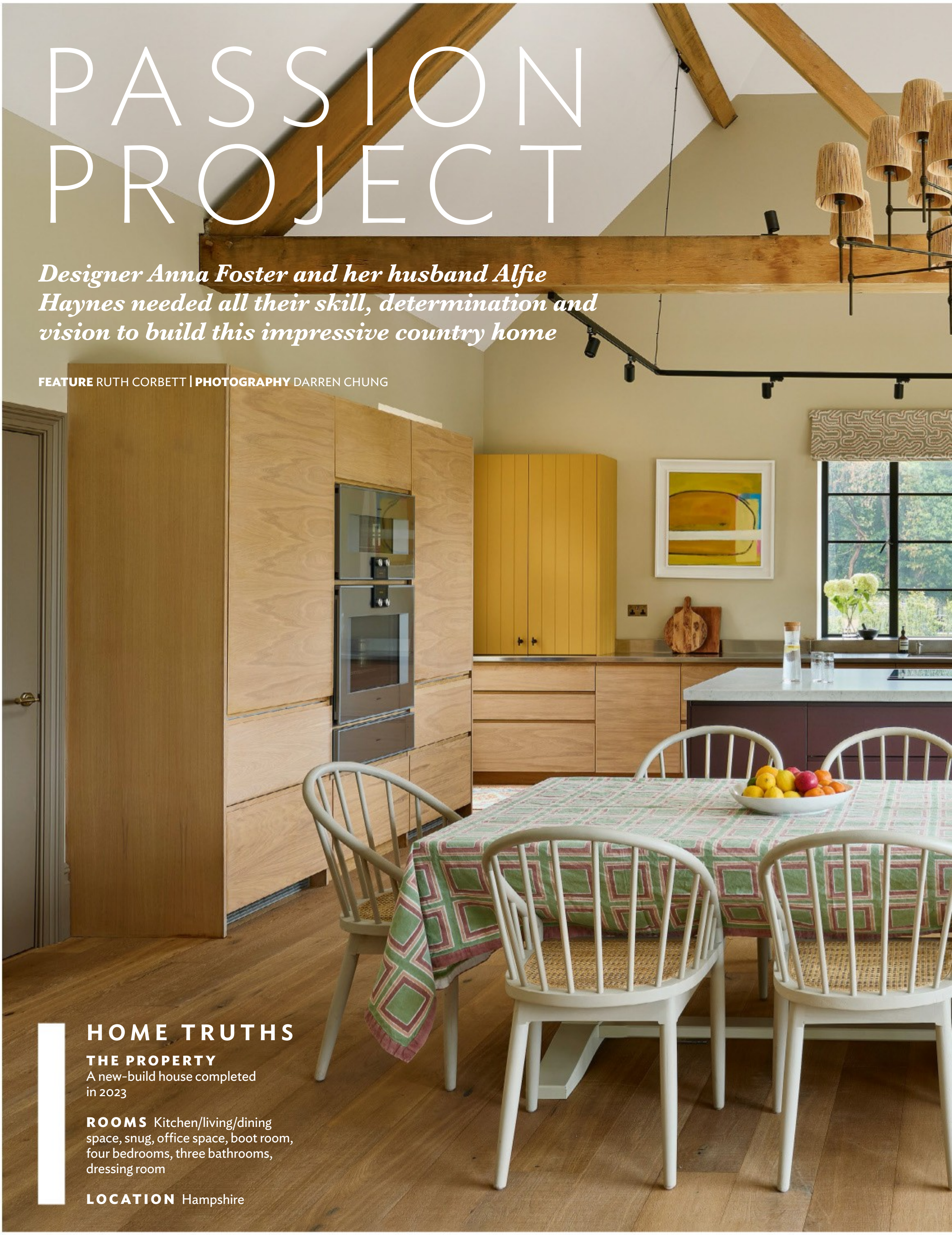
EN SUITE

Marble and gold are a classic combination for a luxurious, high-end finish.
Shower, Swadling. Nouveau Brushed Gold shower door, Lusso, is similar



GUEST BEDROOM

A subtle, chalky hue has been chosen to soften the sharp lines of the angled ceiling.
Walls painted in Elephant's Breath, Farrow & Ball. Fireworks 10055 wallpaper, Missoni Home. Laura Ashley Louis twisted glass floor lamp, Amos Lighting + Home, has this look



PASSION PROJECT

Designer Anna Foster and her husband Alfie Haynes needed all their skill, determination and vision to build this impressive country home

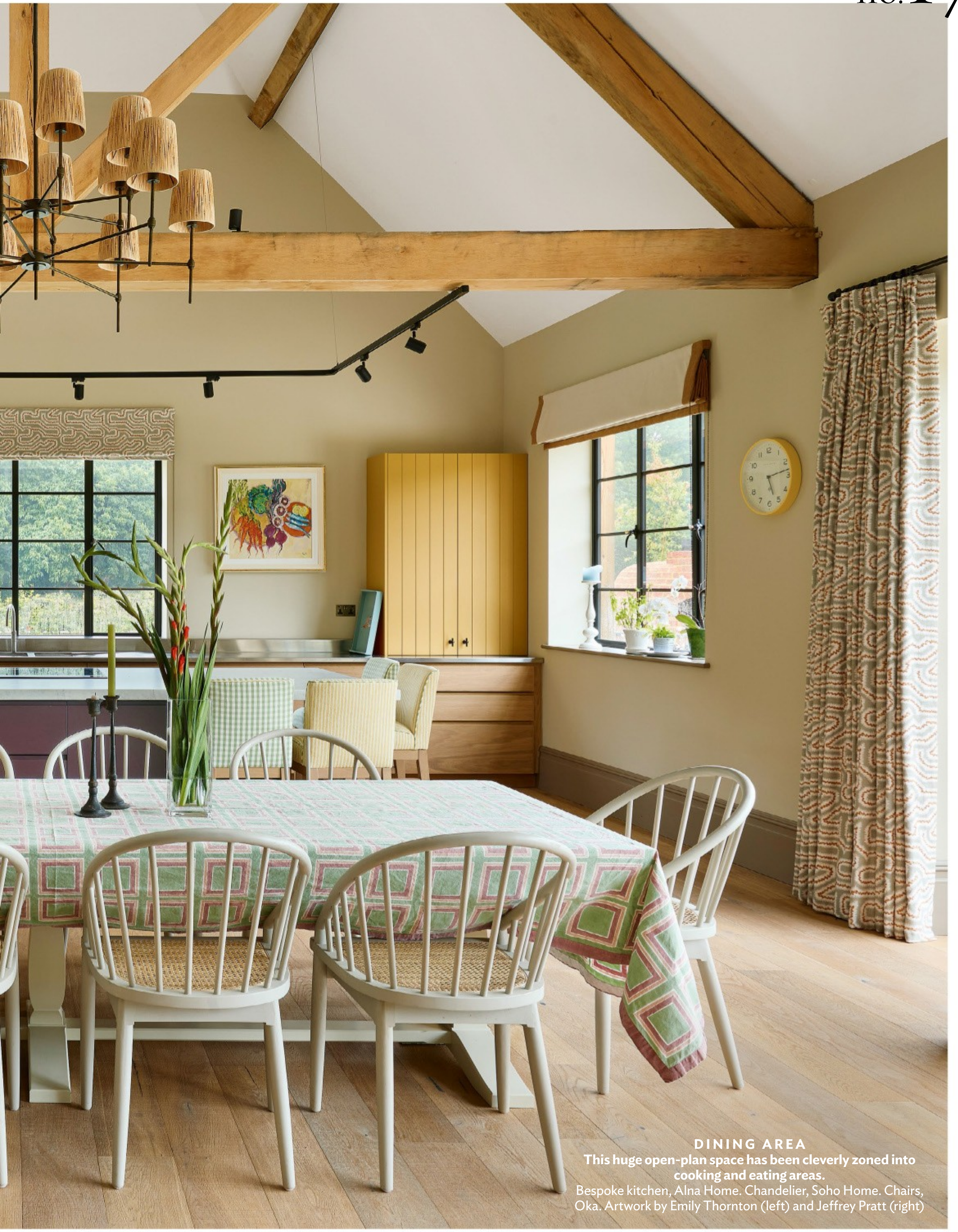
FEATURE RUTH CORBETT | **PHOTOGRAPHY** DARREN CHUNG

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
A new-build house completed in 2023

ROOMS Kitchen/living/dining space, snug, office space, boot room, four bedrooms, three bathrooms, dressing room

LOCATION Hampshire



DINING AREA

This huge open-plan space has been cleverly zoned into cooking and eating areas.

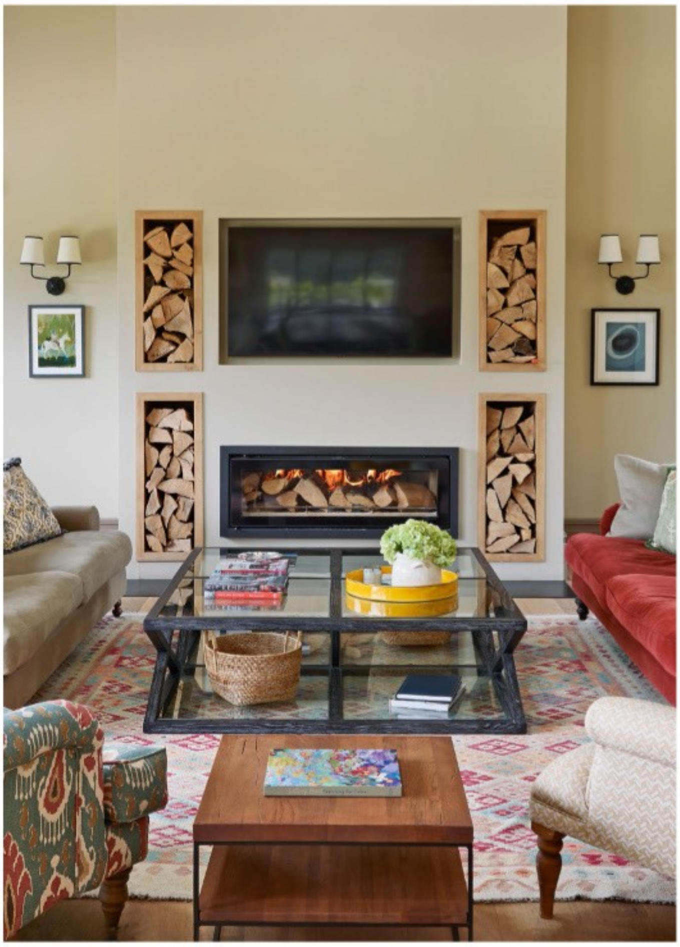
Bespoke kitchen, Alna Home. Chandelier, Soho Home. Chairs, Oka. Artwork by Emily Thornton (left) and Jeffrey Pratt (right)

An overgrown plot strewn with tatty, plastic poly-tunnels may not have appealed to less adventurous types, but for interior designer Anna Foster and her husband, builder and construction company owner Alfie Haynes, it represented so much exciting potential. 'The plot was an abandoned plant nursery with permission to convert the two barns that were still standing on it,' explains Anna.

The couple's decision to buy the property marked the start of a three-year adventure. They moved into one of the barns in 2021 and applied successfully for further planning permission to demolish the barns and construct a bigger house, and within a year had built themselves a brand new, modern-country home.

A house of two halves, each one perfectly complements the other. At one end, a stone building with a farmhouse feel accommodates bedrooms and bathrooms, while at the other a large contemporary barn envelops an open-plan kitchen, dining and living area. 'We wanted something different, but it had to feel empathetic to the secluded leafiness of its surroundings,' says

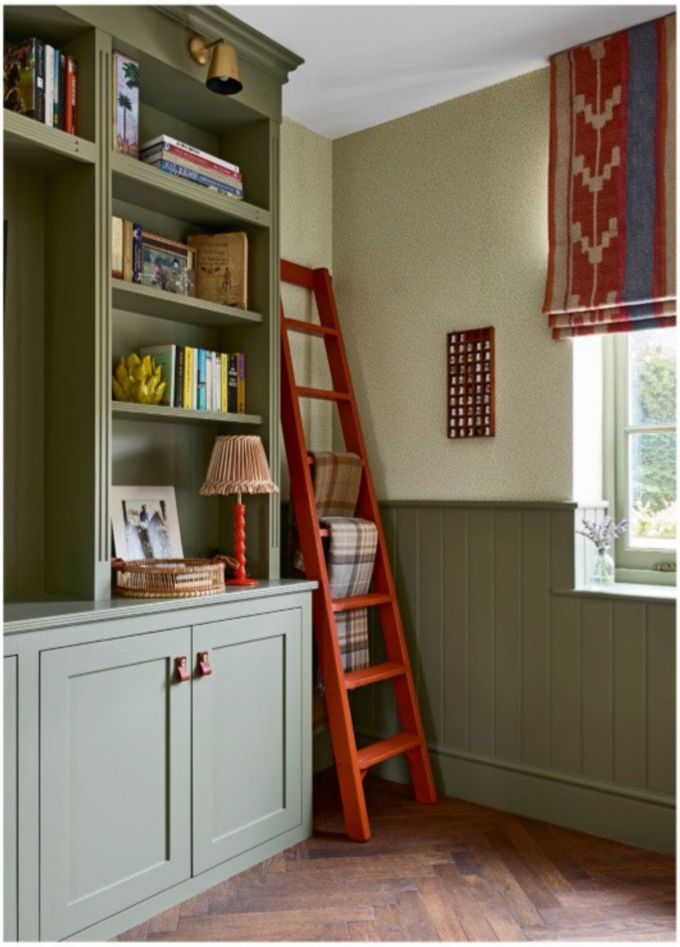
'I LOVE TO EXPERIMENT WITH VIBRANT COLOURS BUT I'M ALSO MINDFUL OF GOING TOO BOLD IN A TRANQUIL COUNTRY SETTING SUCH AS THIS'



LIVING AREA

A smart fireplace and TV wall is flanked by deep sofas and armchairs for a cosy and comfortable feel.

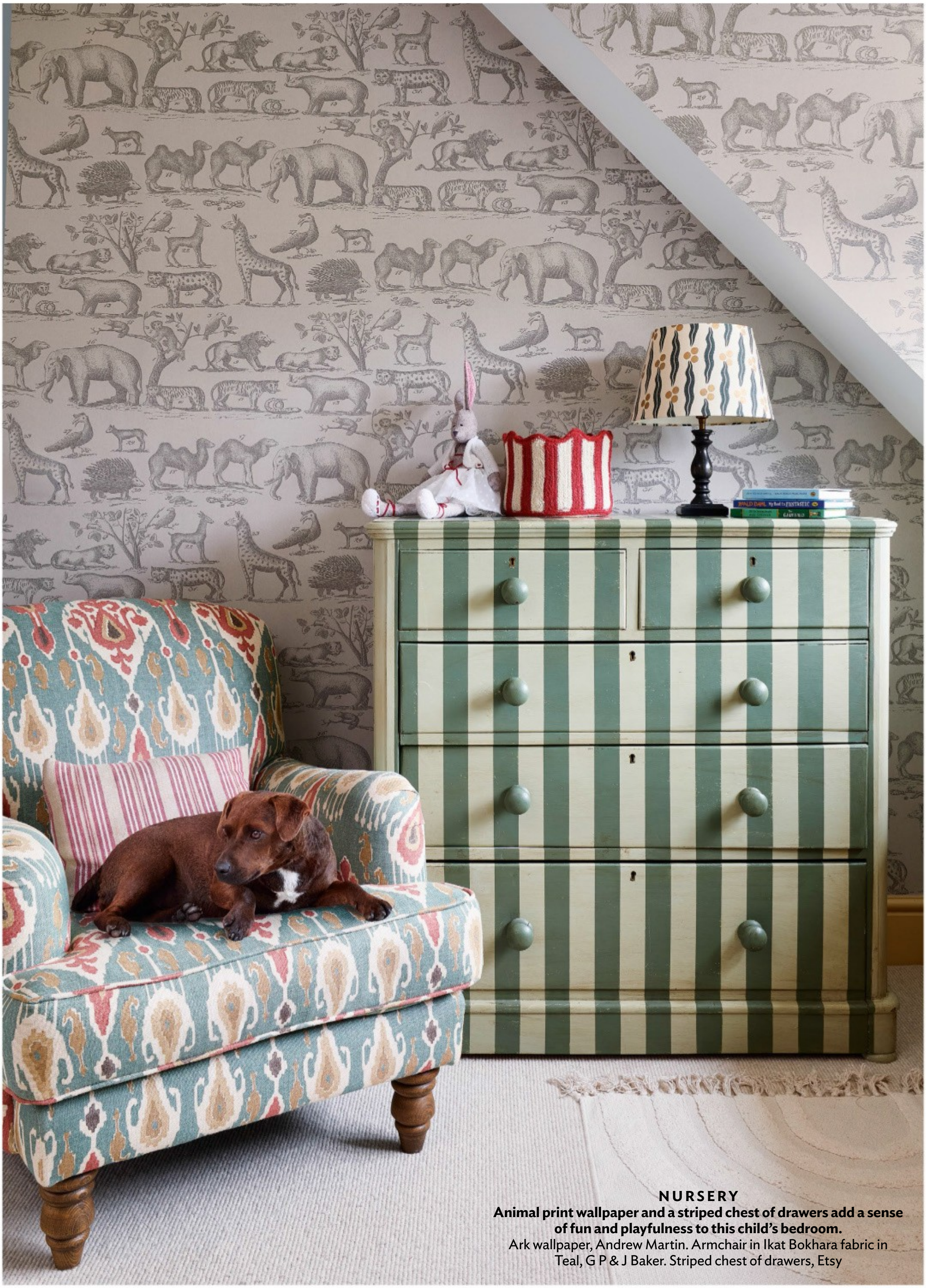
Walls in Old White, Farrow & Ball. Chair (left) in Ikat Bokhara in Teal, G P & J Baker. Chair (right) in Chiltern, Fermoie. Red sofa, Soho Home



SNUG

The snug benefits from a soft but still vibrant colour palette.

Footstool, The Bespoke Footstool Company; in Sawtooth fabric in Tutti Frutti, Lewis & Wood. Wendle wallpaper, Colefax and Fowler. Blind in Indus Brick, Andrew Martin. Similar jute rug, La Redoute



NURSERY

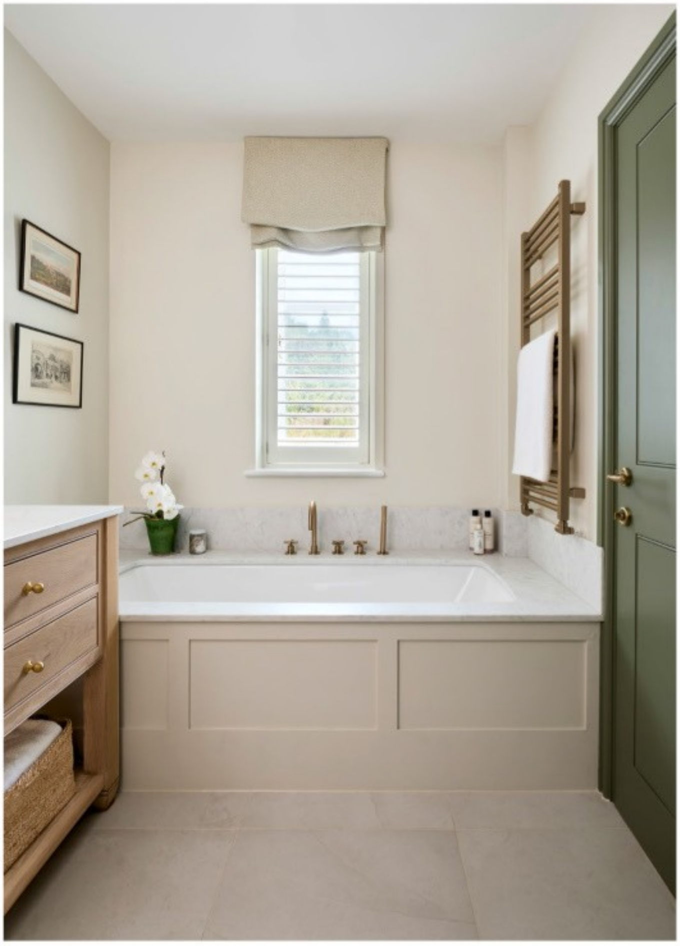
Animal print wallpaper and a striped chest of drawers add a sense of fun and playfulness to this child's bedroom.
Ark wallpaper, Andrew Martin. Armchair in Ikat Bokhara fabric in Teal, G P & J Baker. Striped chest of drawers, Etsy

Anna. 'The rustic charm of the bedroom end delivers just the right amount of contrast to the fun and vibrant barn end, which is great for gatherings and entertaining.'

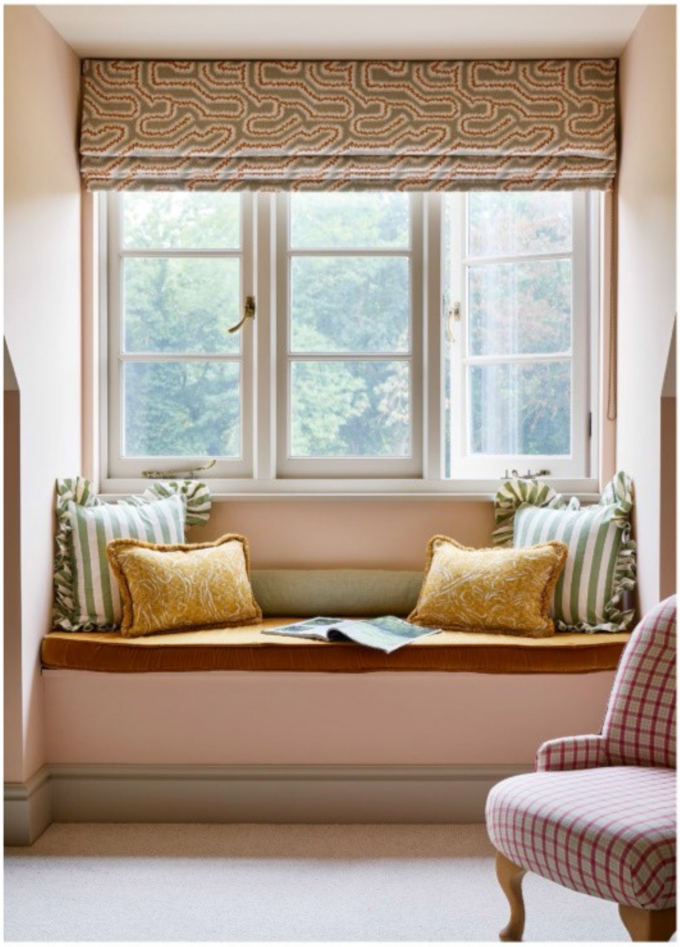
Built to fit the couple's sociable, outdoorsy lifestyle, the house ticks all the must-haves from their original wish list. On the ground floor, as well as the kitchen and entertaining spaces, there are three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a snug and a boot room. 'Essential for kicking off wellies after country walks,' says Anna. Upstairs are the main bedroom, bathroom and dressing room. 'The mission up here was to fit the three rooms in, in a practical but elegant way,' explains Anna. 'Alfie planned it so that from the bedroom, you walk through the dressing room and then into the bathroom. When planning the layout, thinking carefully about how you actually like to live is key to getting all the elements right.'

The main event, though, is the barn area. At eight metres high and seven and a half metres wide, it's a masterclass in expansive, open-plan living. 'I didn't want a traditional country kitchen. I wanted it to feel fun and fresh,' says

> **'WHEN PLANNING THE LAYOUT, THINKING CAREFULLY ABOUT HOW YOU ACTUALLY LIKE TO LIVE IS KEY TO GETTING ALL THE ELEMENTS RIGHT'**



EN SUITE
An under-mounted, fitted bath feels luxurious and the surface space creates room for candles and toiletries.
Door in Sage Green, Little Greene. Bath surround, Surrey Marble & Granite. Blind in Pollen in Fennel, Andrew Martin



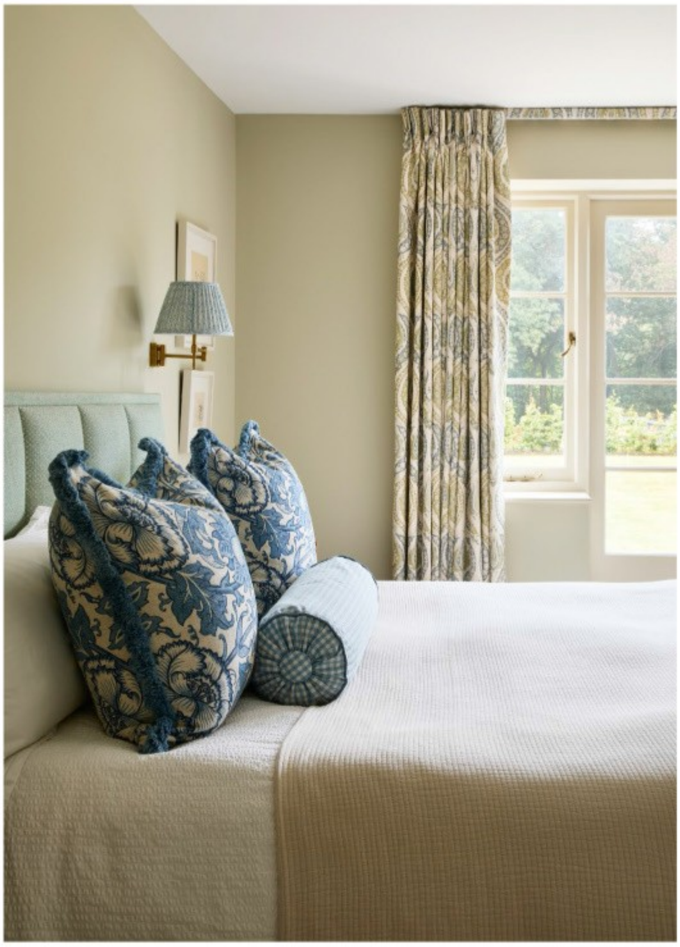
MAIN BEDROOM
A soothing colour scheme combined with padded upholstery and plenty of cushions ensure this is a restful space.
Walls in Setting Plaster, Farrow & Ball. Window seat in House Velvet in Ochre, G P & J Baker. Blind in Moorish Maze, Rapture & Wright

Anna. 'The architect thought the kitchen should be at the other end of the barn, but that's north-facing and we stood our ground. We wanted a space that was light throughout the day.' Punchy shades such as yellow and cola on the island unit, and colourful, contemporary artwork bring a sense of modernity, while sleek, handle-free cabinetry, built by Anna and Alfie's company, Alna Home, ensures a streamlined look and an abundance of storage space. In a gentle nod to tradition Anna has fitted patterned curtains and a bright, graphic fabric covers the dining table. 'We factored in a pantry, too, which is great for housing all the other kitchen essentials.'

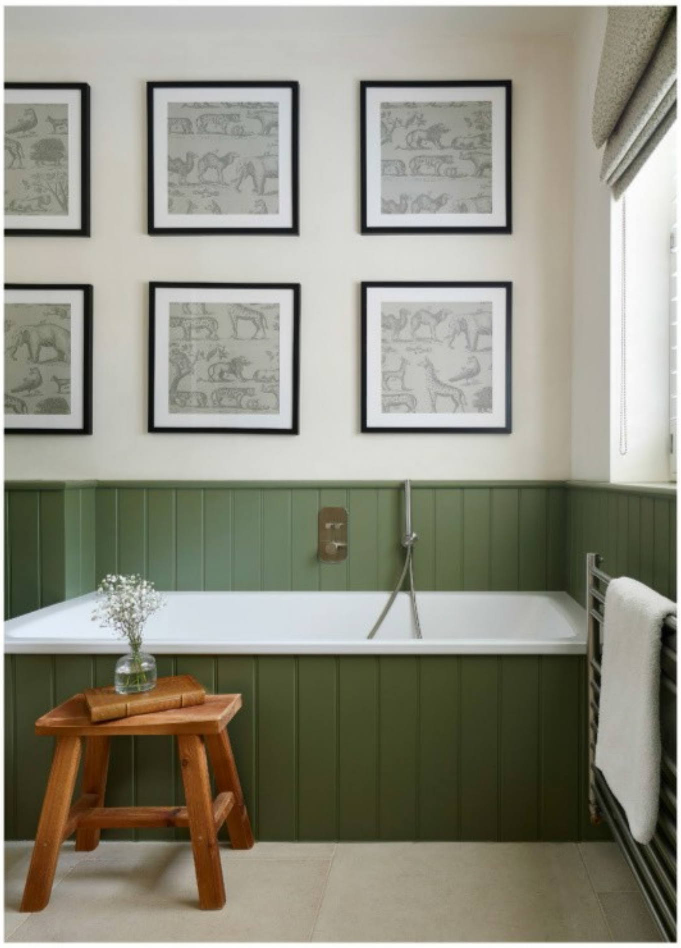
The seating area is cosy with a playful feel. There are non-matching sofas, an open fire and even a bar. 'The wine room next to this was top of Alfie's wish list,' says Anna. 'There's plenty of pattern here, too. It's important to give a house character, especially a new build. It's an amazing opportunity to create a home that suits your lifestyle; that's efficient, beautiful and full of personality. I think we've managed that here.' ㉕

annafosterdesign.com

> **'IT'S IMPORTANT TO GIVE A HOUSE CHARACTER, ESPECIALLY A NEW BUILD – IT'S AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A HOME THAT'S FULL OF PERSONALITY'**



BEDROOM
The calm blue and green scheme reflects the colours of the garden, which can be accessed through French doors.
Lampshade in Light Blue Popple, Fermoie. Curtains made in Benaki linen fabric, Lewis & Wood



BATHROOM
A practical family space has been accessorised in an easy, budget-friendly way with framed wallpaper off-cuts.
Lumi stone-effect porcelain floor tiles, Mandarin Stone. Tongue-and-groove panelling painted in Treron, Farrow & Ball

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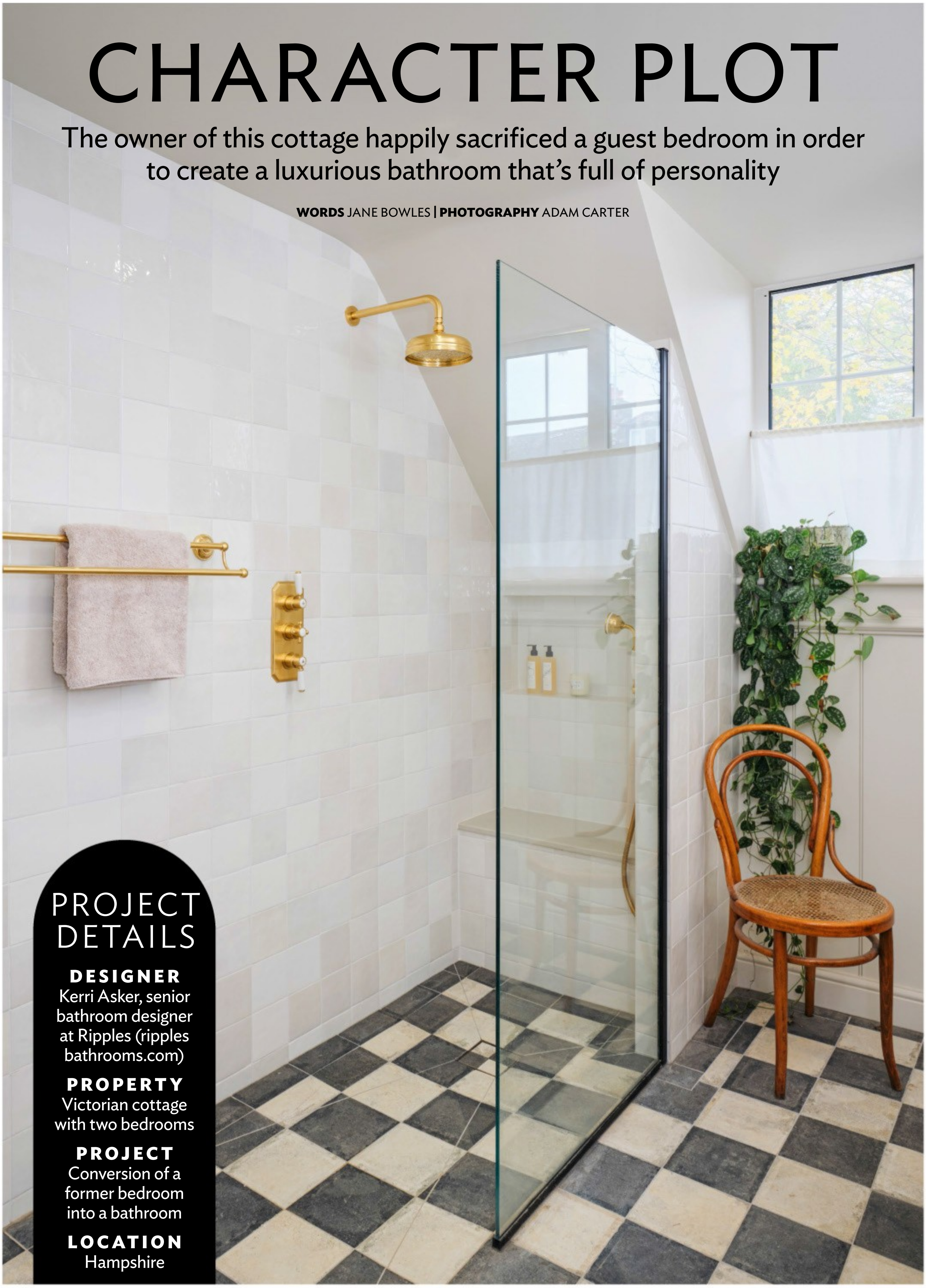


CHARACTER PLOT

The owner of this cottage happily sacrificed a guest bedroom in order to create a luxurious bathroom that's full of personality

WORDS JANE BOWLES | **PHOTOGRAPHY** ADAM CARTER

PROJECT DETAILS

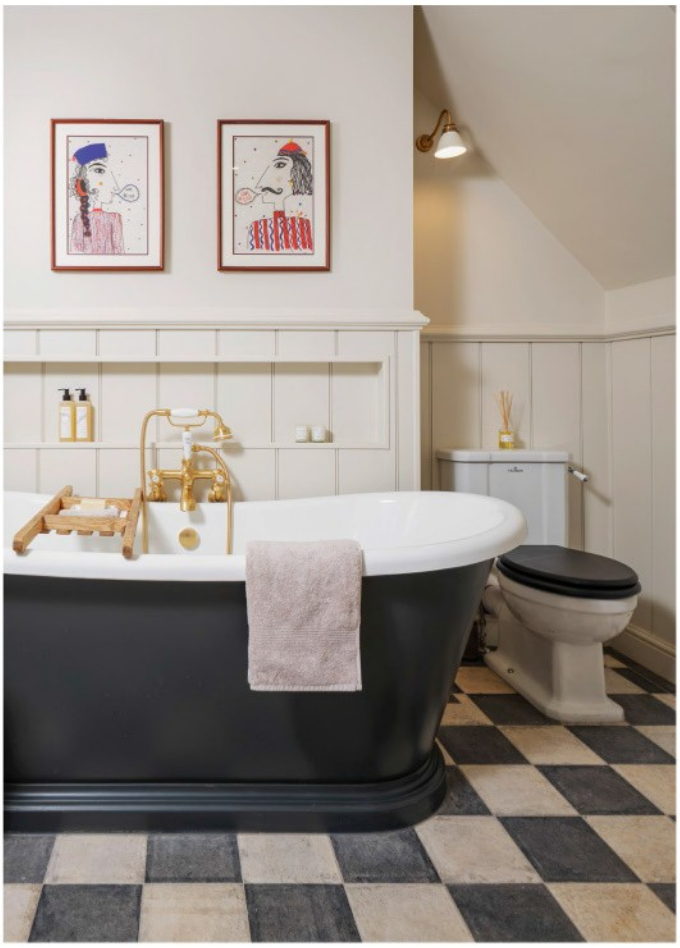
DESIGNER
Kerri Asker, senior bathroom designer at Ripples (ripplesbathrooms.com)

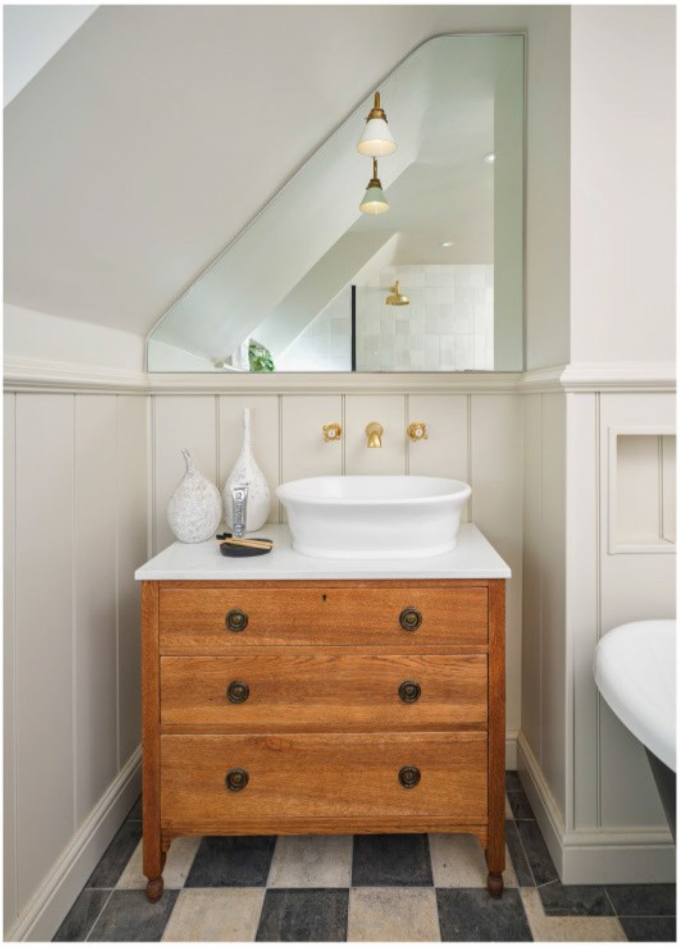
PROPERTY
Victorian cottage with two bedrooms

PROJECT
Conversion of a former bedroom into a bathroom

LOCATION
Hampshire

no.18





Kerri Asker, senior designer at Ripples, was commissioned to convert one of the bedrooms in this cottage into a bathroom that her client could enjoy. 'A luxurious bath was high on the priority list,' says Kerri, 'as was a practical shower area.'

1 BED-TO-BATH CONVERSION

Having sacrificed the luxury of having a spare bedroom, Kerri's client was keen to realise her ideal bathroom and it was important to tailor the space to suit her lifestyle. 'My client was very clear she wanted a luxurious free-standing bath where she could relax,' says Kerri. 'Since the former bedroom was quite spacious, there was also plenty of room for a walk-in shower.'

2 MAKING A STATEMENT

The former bedroom's chimney breast was the ideal place to locate the freestanding bath and create a statement feature with the wow factor. 'Free-standing baths do not usually have much surface space, so I incorporated an alcove next to the bath, which is the perfect spot to place a glass of champagne and a candle,' says Kerri.

3 LESS IS MORE

Kerri's client chose a bold chequerboard floor to add visual impact and create an authentic cottage feel. 'It works beautifully with the dark-painted bath and brushed brassware,' says Kerri. 'We then pared things back with lustrous zellige style tiles in the shower to reflect more light around the room.' The space was finished with wooden panelling, painted in a warm and calming neutral shade.

4 A NOD TO TRADITION

'My client was keen to reflect the period feel of the cottage in the bathroom design,' says Kerri. 'Instead of a bathroom vanity unit, she opted for a reclaimed dresser, which brings a unique warmth and texture to the room and is also in keeping with the heritage of the cottage.' An oak wooden stool and bathroom tidy add further depth to the scheme.

FORM AND FUNCTION

'The sloping ceilings at both ends of the room had to be carefully considered and I used this to our advantage in the walk-in shower area to create a seating nook,' says Kerri. Bespoke **panelling in** Joanna eggshell, Little Greene. BC Designs roll-top acrylic boat **bath**; BC Designs crosshead wall-mounted **bath mixer** in Brushed Gold; BC Designs Triple two-way concealed **shower valve** in Brushed Gold, all Ripples. Richmond **wall light**, Corston, is similar. Try Weathered oak wood **stool**, Cox & Cox. Similar wooden **bath tidy**, The White Company. Urban porcelain **floor tiles** in Charcoal and Taupe, Fired Earth

Reclaiming THE PAST

Reused, recycled and reclaimed materials were key to the successful renovation of Lee Thornley's family home – the result is a house that feels completely unique

WORDS RUTH CORBETT | **PHOTOGRAPHY** BETH DAVIS

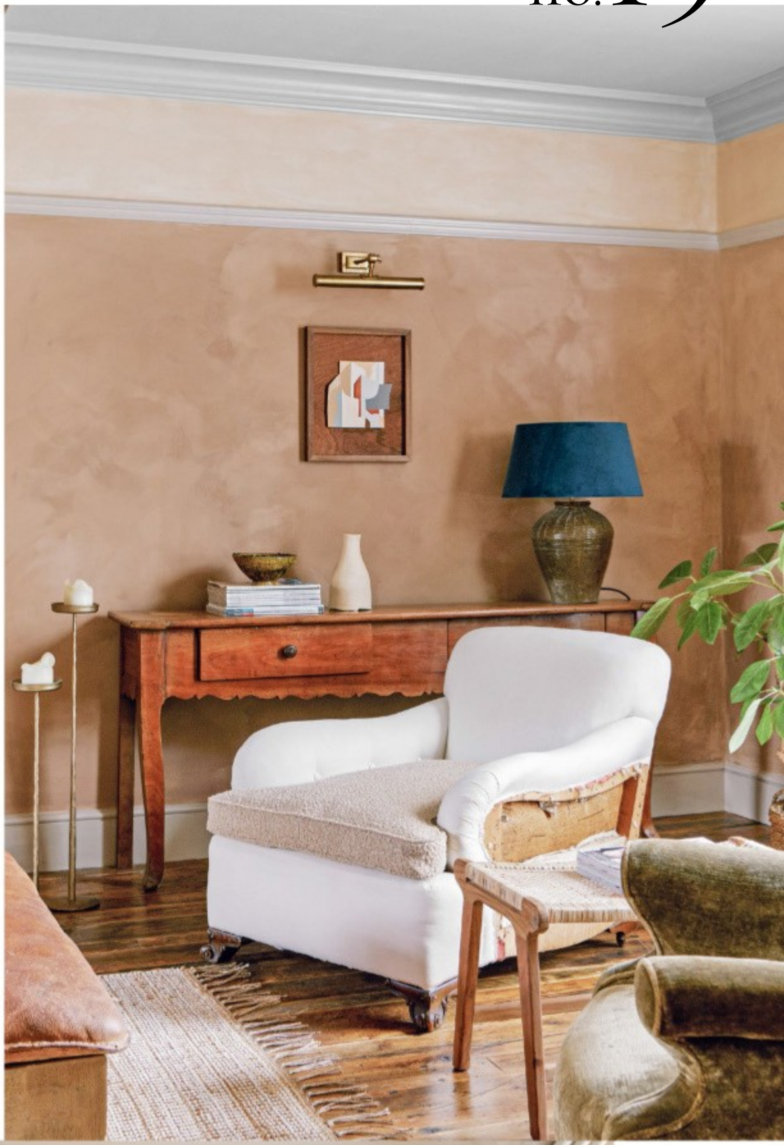
no.19

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Originally two early-19th-century workers' cottages, this is now a single home

ROOMS
Kitchen-diner, sitting room, snug, four bedrooms, four bathrooms

LOCATION
Yorkshire



SITTING ROOM
Antique bookcases, console tables and paintings found at fairs reflect the older parts of the house, as do well-loved armchairs with the stuffing exposed. Axel sofa, Hadeda. Carnegie leather and fabric footstool is similar, Lee Longlands. Try the Belvedere armchair in Natural, Nordic Style London

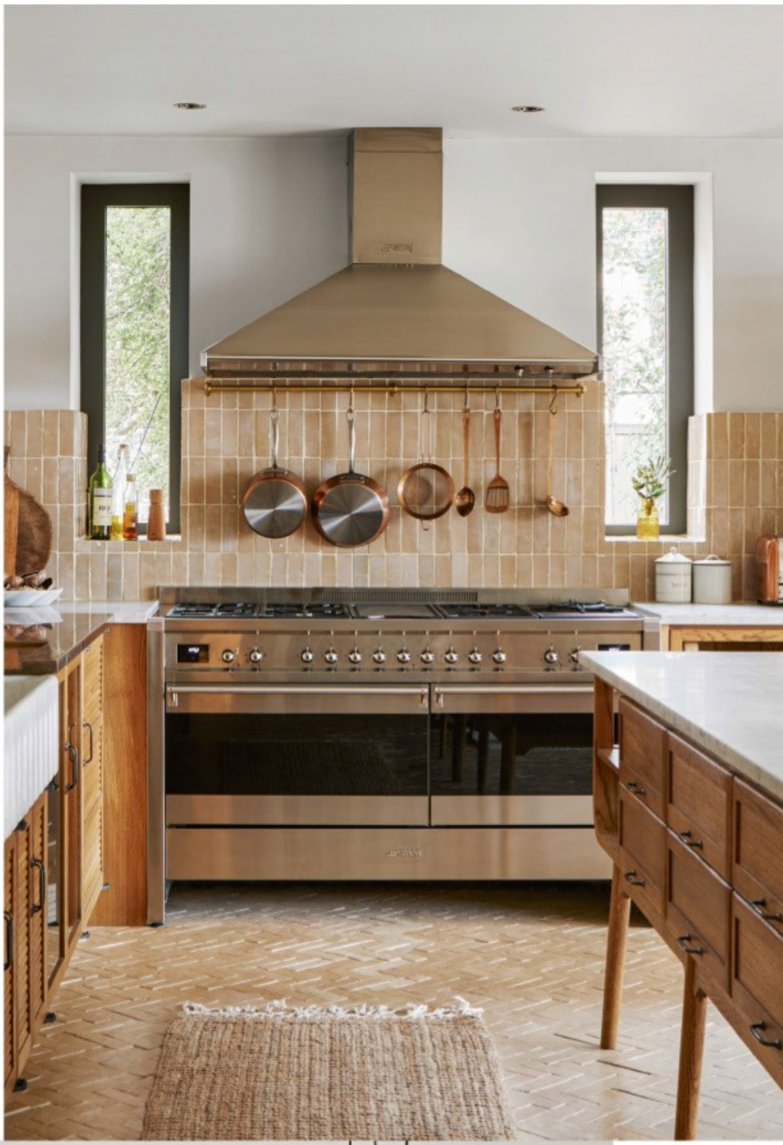
Lee Thornley's 2022 property purchase was a success on many levels. Not only was it an opportunity to create a home for his family – his two daughters, Iris and Lyla, and his partner, Phil – it also allowed him to develop his passion for using reclaimed materials, some of which hail from his tile business, Bert & May. 'We chose reclaimed wherever we could,' he says, 'There's handmade terracotta on the floor in the kitchen, reclaimed elm boards throughout the rest of the downstairs and a reclaimed oak floor upstairs.'

Although the pair of cottages had already been joined and extended, the resulting property was still a house of two halves, with two staircases, two kitchens and a muddle of small rooms. 'Despite being over 3,000 square feet, it felt pokey,' Lee explains. 'We knew it had potential, but it needed to be fully remodelled to create more open, family-orientated spaces, so we removed internal walls and rejigged the upstairs into four en-suite bedrooms.'

Much of the original character had been concealed, with false ceilings covering the original beams, and fireplaces and stained-glass windows having been boxed in. Lee and Phil poured a lot of time into exposing what they hoped were the beautiful bones beneath, removing everything they possibly could, without the house falling down, while also taking care to respect the original craftspeople that built it.

The heart of the home is the kitchen-diner where the ambience is firmly mid-century. Its unpainted oak cupboards from deVOL are finished with tinted oil,

'I have a passion for reclaimed things – plus, older materials are often far better quality than new and more attractive too'

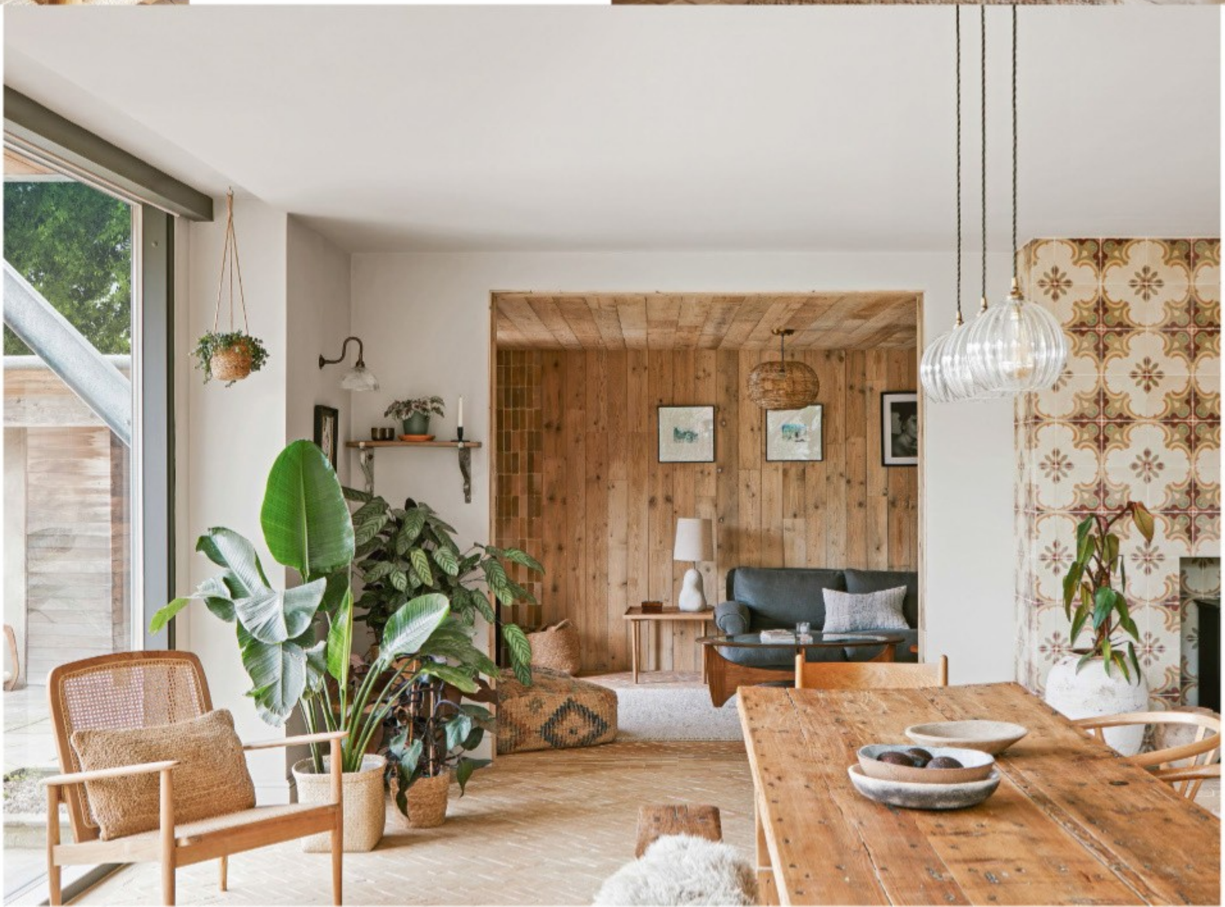


KITCHEN-DINER

'For the splashback Phil wanted our graphic Rio cement squares, but I reasoned that the sandy-coloured zellige in a two-by-six-inch format would be timeless,' says Lee. 'The Rio tiles have ended up around the fireplace, which now looks like a piece of art.' Splashback in Bejmat Hessian zellige tiles; floor in Marrakesh Raw Bejmat tiles, both Bert & May. Haberdasher's kitchen and island; Heirloom Gaselier light, all deVOL. CH24 Wishbone chairs, Holloways of Ludlow

VIEW TO SNUG

This timber-clad area is open plan to the kitchen-diner, promoting an easy sense of flow in the main living areas. Chimney breast in Rio cement tiles, Bert & May. Pumpkin pendant lights, Pooky



which makes scrapes and scratches incredibly easy to repair, and the island went through scores of different design possibilities before being extended to a gargantuan 10 feet, to ensure it would look at home in the extra-large, open-plan space. 'We like furniture that has a nostalgic, slightly 70s aesthetic, with warm wood, gentle curves and slim, glazed storage,' says Lee.

Upstairs, in a room formerly the sitting room, is the main bedroom suite, with a free-standing bathtub next to the fireplace and a panoramic view overlooking the garden. 'It's such a sanctuary now,' says Lee. 'The palette of earthy tones set against natural terracotta, limewash and real wood creates a fluid dialogue between the inside and outside. We had the room clad in reclaimed whitewashed timber, which feels cabin-like and cosy.'

Once floors, tiles and cabinetry were in place, it was time to consider the details. 'Having tactile, beautiful elements enhances your enjoyment of a space no end,' says Lee. To this end, lovely switches and sockets in antique brass, which ages beautifully, glint like little jewels throughout. It's thoughtful additions such as these that add a luxurious touch to the overall feel.

Lee advocates going with your heart when decorating a home. 'You'll create a "vanilla" interior if you play it too safe. So whether you like maximalist interiors, or dark colours, or antiques, or whatever it is, you must go for it. This is your chance to be an artist and express yourself in your home. In my opinion, an interior is a success when it's unique and reflects the personalities of those who live in it.' ㉕

'I'm a true believer that if we can reuse and recycle, then we absolutely should – it's simply too important not to'

MAIN BEDROOM SUITE

A balcony accessed by a bank of glazed sliding doors allows this beautiful room to be flooded with daylight. Wood and rattan bench, Zara Home. Reclaimed bath painted in Little Greene's Rolling Fog. Chimney breast in Deia tiles, Bert & May

BATHROOM

Unexpected elements pack a punch – and here it is the rough-hewn stone basins topped by an abundance of greenery. Reclaimed stone basins, Bert & May. Fine Edge mirrors, Heal's. Flume wall light, J Adams & Co

CHILD'S ROOM

Toys, extra blankets and craft projects can be piled into the ottoman to keep the space tidy. Mystica Velour ottoman storage bench, Dunelm. Similar circular shelf, Graham and Green. Try Hazelette pendant, Pooky

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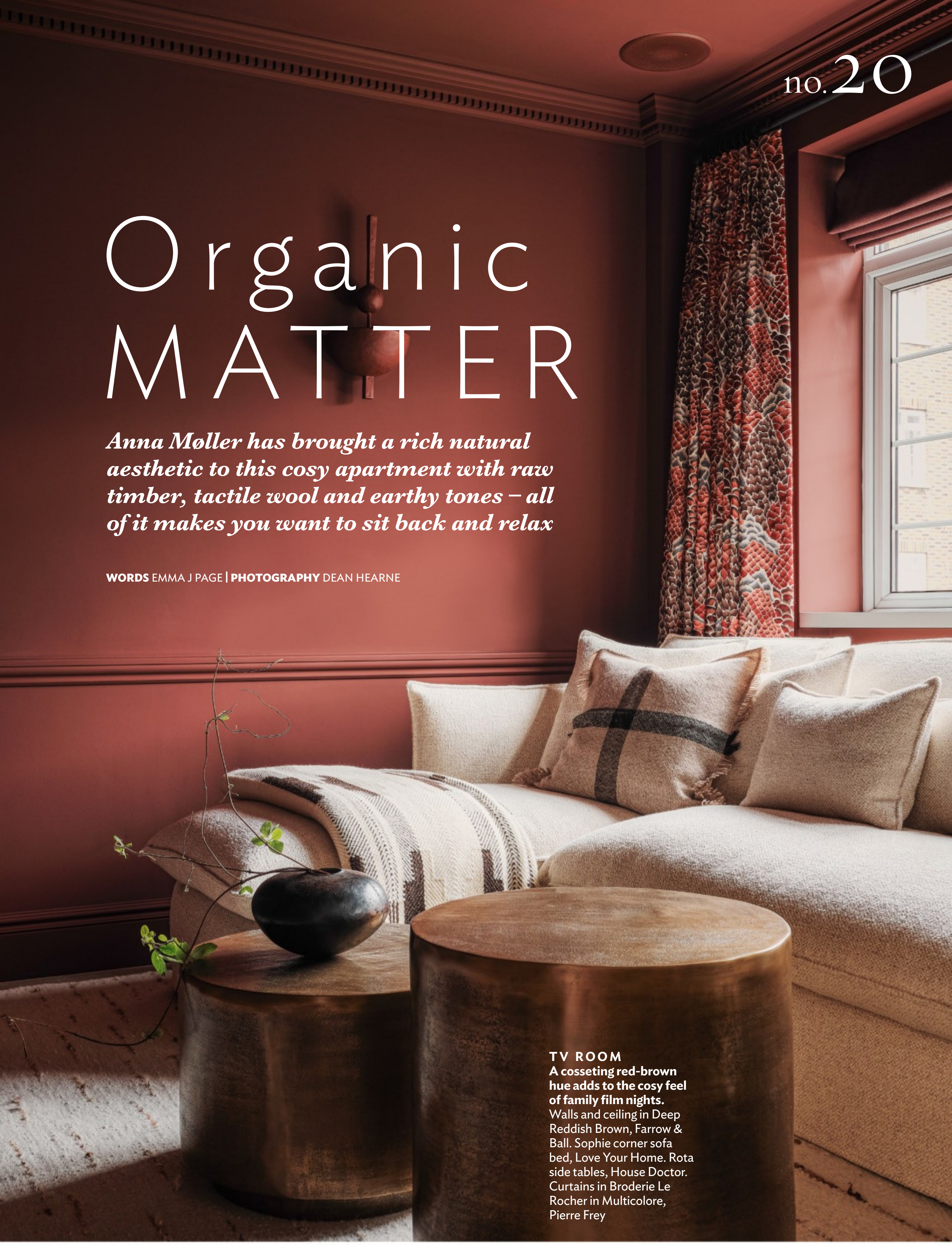


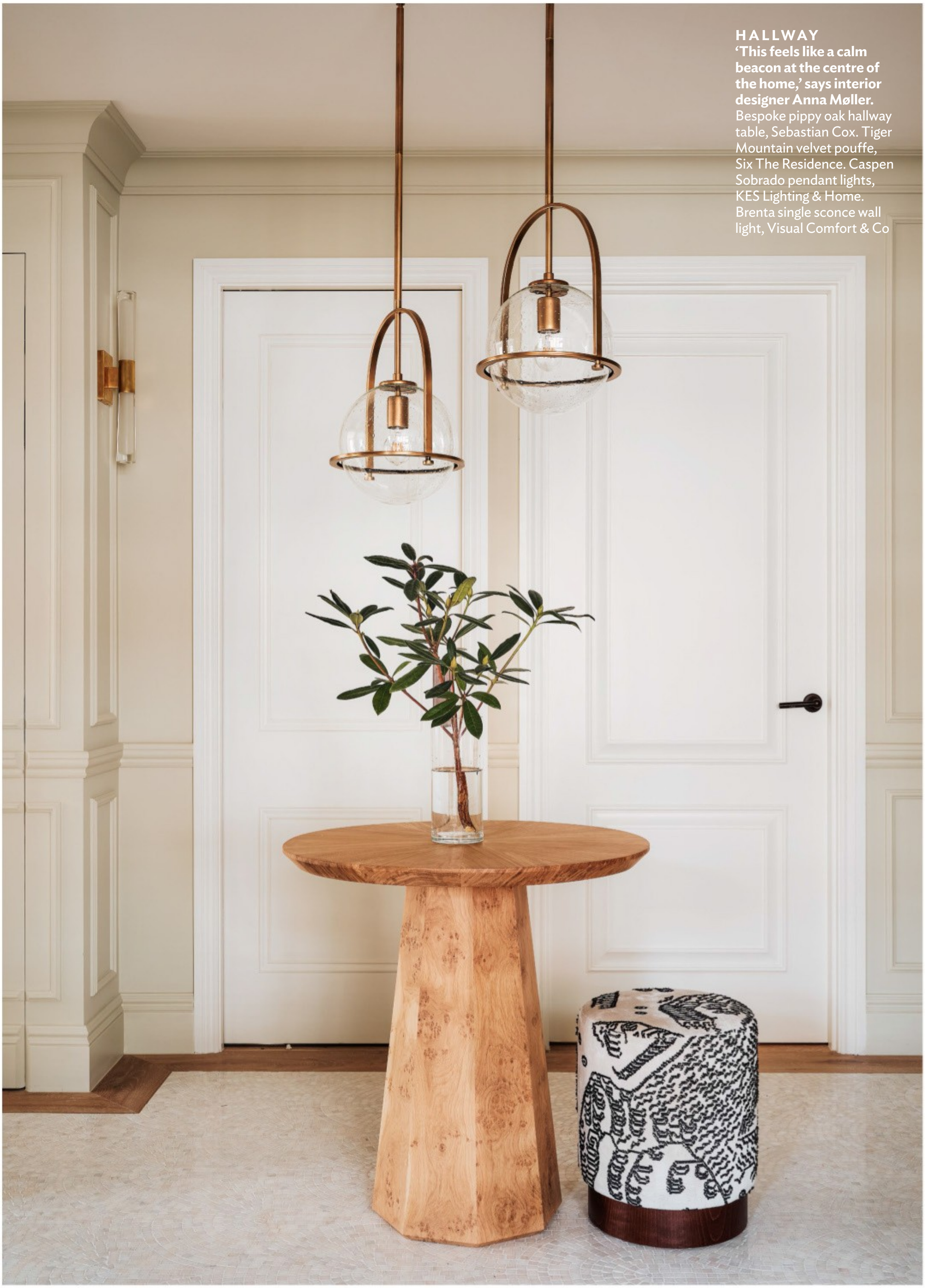
no.20

Organic MATTER

Anna Møller has brought a rich natural aesthetic to this cosy apartment with raw timber, tactile wool and earthy tones – all of it makes you want to sit back and relax

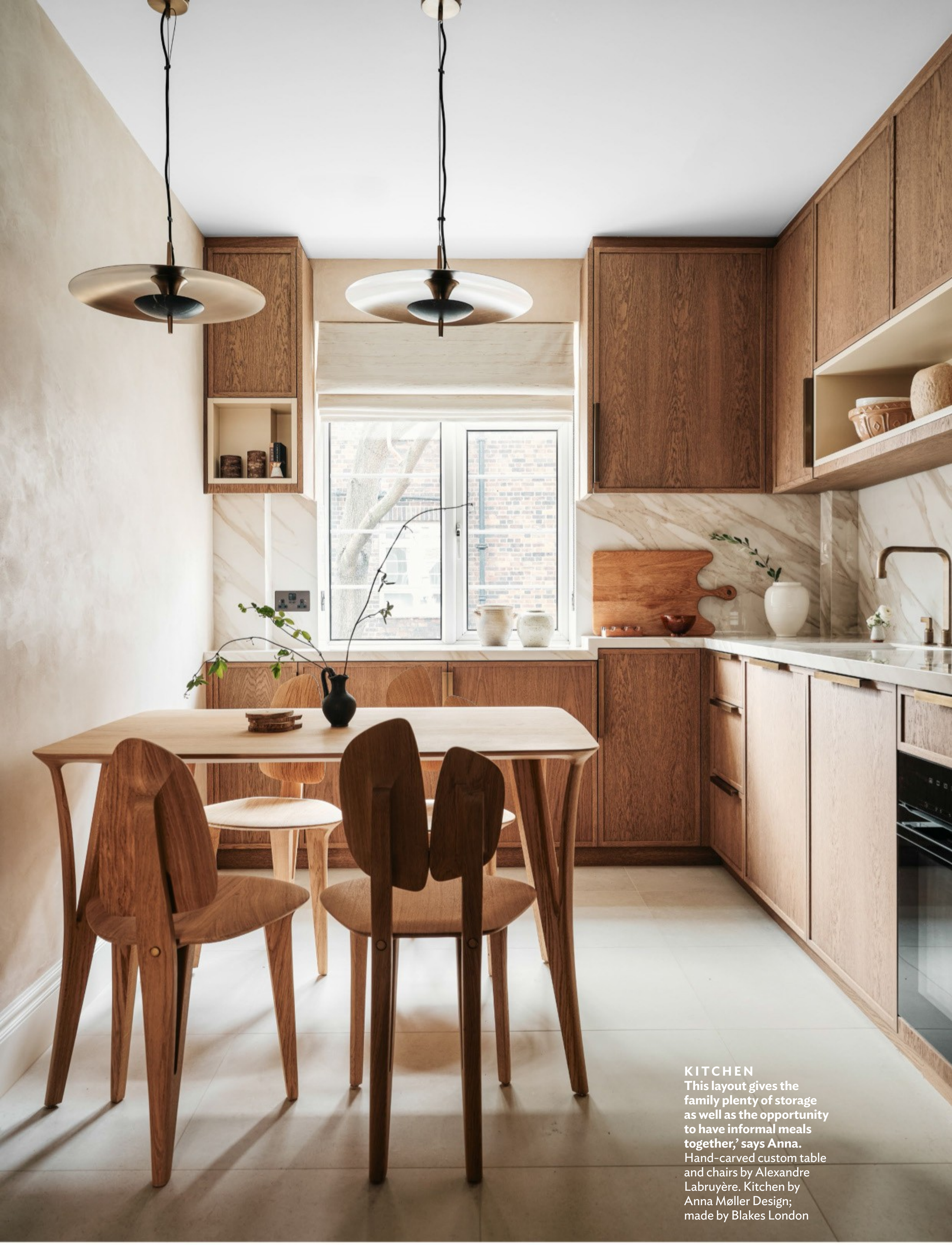
WORDS EMMA J PAGE | **PHOTOGRAPHY** DEAN HEARNE

TV ROOM
A cosseting red-brown hue adds to the cosy feel of family film nights. Walls and ceiling in Deep Reddish Brown, Farrow & Ball. Sophie corner sofa bed, Love Your Home. Rota side tables, House Doctor. Curtains in Broderie Le Rocher in Multicolore, Pierre Frey



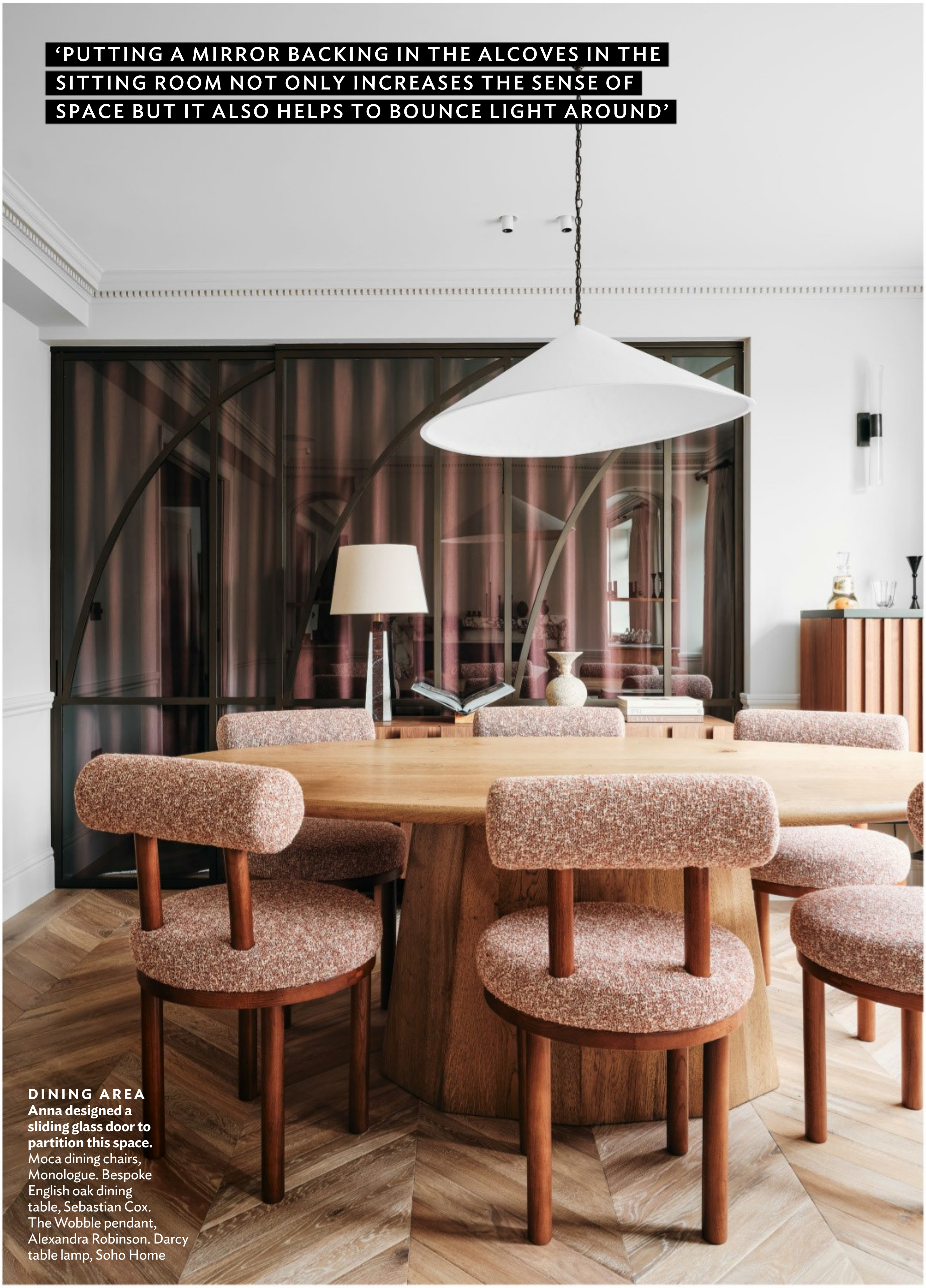
HALLWAY

'This feels like a calm beacon at the centre of the home,' says interior designer Anna Møller. Bespoke pippy oak hallway table, Sebastian Cox. Tiger Mountain velvet pouffe, Six The Residence. Caspen Sobrado pendant lights, KES Lighting & Home. Brenta single sconce wall light, Visual Comfort & Co

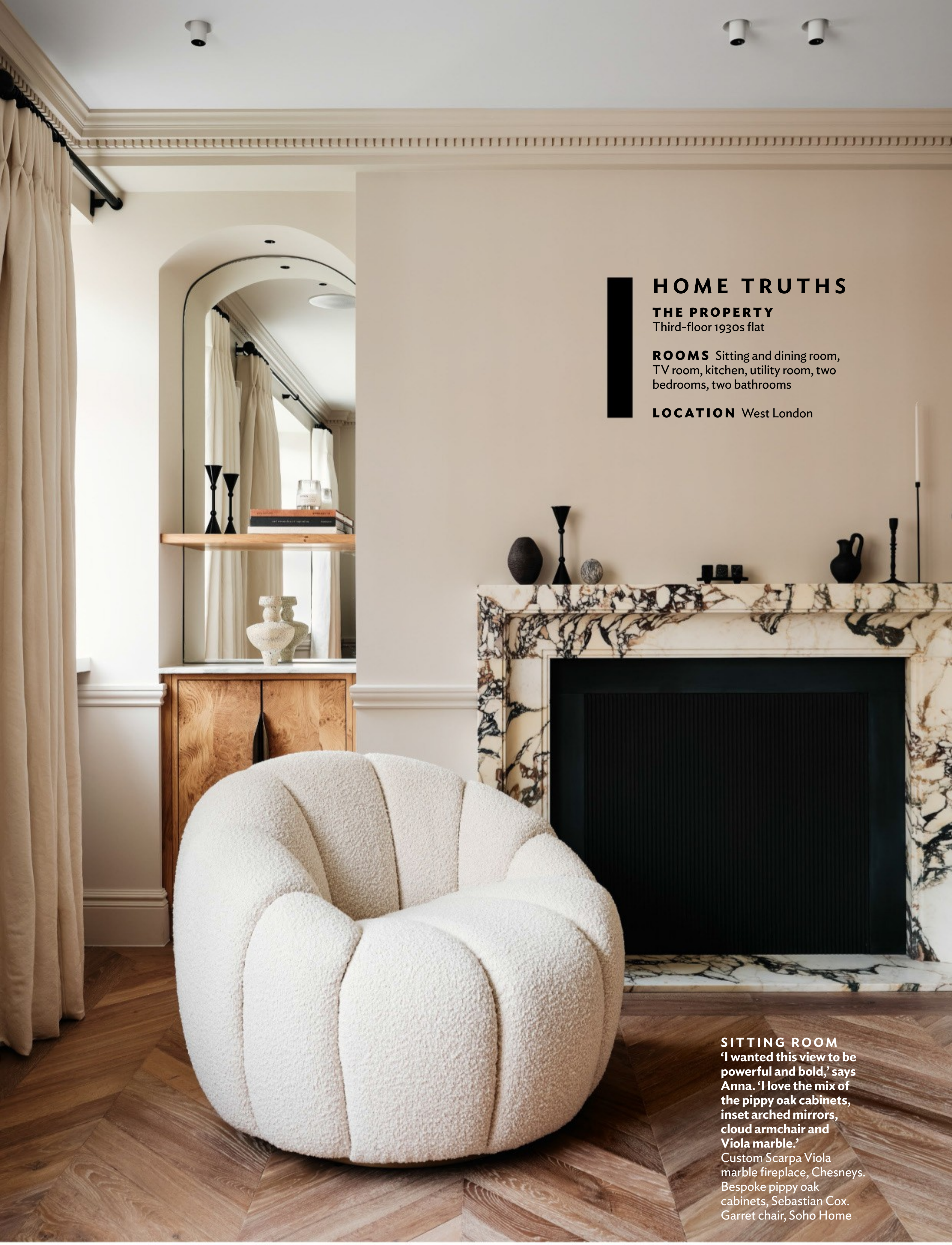


KITCHEN
This layout gives the family plenty of storage as well as the opportunity to have informal meals together,' says Anna. Hand-carved custom table and chairs by Alexandre Labruyère. Kitchen by Anna Møller Design; made by Blakes London

‘PUTTING A MIRROR BACKING IN THE ALCOVES IN THE SITTING ROOM NOT ONLY INCREASES THE SENSE OF SPACE BUT IT ALSO HELPS TO BOUNCE LIGHT AROUND’



DINING AREA
Anna designed a sliding glass door to partition this space. Moca dining chairs, Monologue. Bespoke English oak dining table, Sebastian Cox. The Wobble pendant, Alexandra Robinson. Darcy table lamp, Soho Home



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Third-floor 1930s flat

ROOMS Sitting and dining room, TV room, kitchen, utility room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms

LOCATION West London

SITTING ROOM
'I wanted this view to be powerful and bold,' says Anna. 'I love the mix of the pippy oak cabinets, inset arched mirrors, cloud armchair and Viola marble.'
Custom Scarpa Viola marble fireplace, Chesneys. Bespoke pippy oak cabinets, Sebastian Cox. Garret chair, Soho Home

When I first saw this space, it all already contained several moments of joy, from architectural details to the way the light streamed through the living room windows,' says interior designer Anna Møller. 'My job was to enhance them. It was all about creating rich, cosy spaces that expressed a tension between graphic lines and soft, sinuous curves.'

Anna's clients, a family of four, already lived in the 1930s building and jumped at the chance to upgrade to a home with a more generous footprint. 'We wanted a space where we could all eat together, a separate TV room for laid-back movie watching and two bathrooms so as to avoid traffic jams in the mornings,' says the wife, a fashion designer. 'We knew we could do something clever by rationalising the layout and were drawn to the simplicity and honesty of Anna's work.'

Counter-intuitively, the first task was to reduce three bedrooms to two. 'It was all about creating an ergonomic design that suited the lifestyle of the family,' explains Anna. 'So we merged two bedrooms to make one, more generous, principal room and reworked the two bathrooms, extending them and turning one into an en suite. Though we technically lost a guest bedroom, we created a dual-function space out of the TV room, which has a sofa bed to accommodate visitors.'

Driven by rigorous shapes and well-thought-out interior architecture, Anna conceived schemes that riff on her Danish heritage (her paternal grandparents, an architect and a landscape gardener from Copenhagen, built their own home in the English countryside). Walls and floors take the lead in her designs, she says, with fabrics and decorative elements following on. And so, herringbone coexists with delicate mosaics and generous wood borders frame traditional carpet. Throughout, those transitions in flooring are meticulously finished, either seamlessly or with paper-thin brass joins.

Key to the renovation's success is a selection of craft-made pieces, from the bespoke pippy oak alcove cupboards and English oak dining table by Sebastian Cox, to the hand-carved kitchen table and chairs by Alexandre Labruyère, which Anna cites as her favourite pieces for their perfect blend of form and function. 'I'm a firm believer that we have a better, more intimate relationship with eco-conscious furniture,' she says. 'It's harder to feel that connection when looking at a plastic chair. But a raw timber table or a wool upholstered bench immediately resonates because of its connection to nature.'

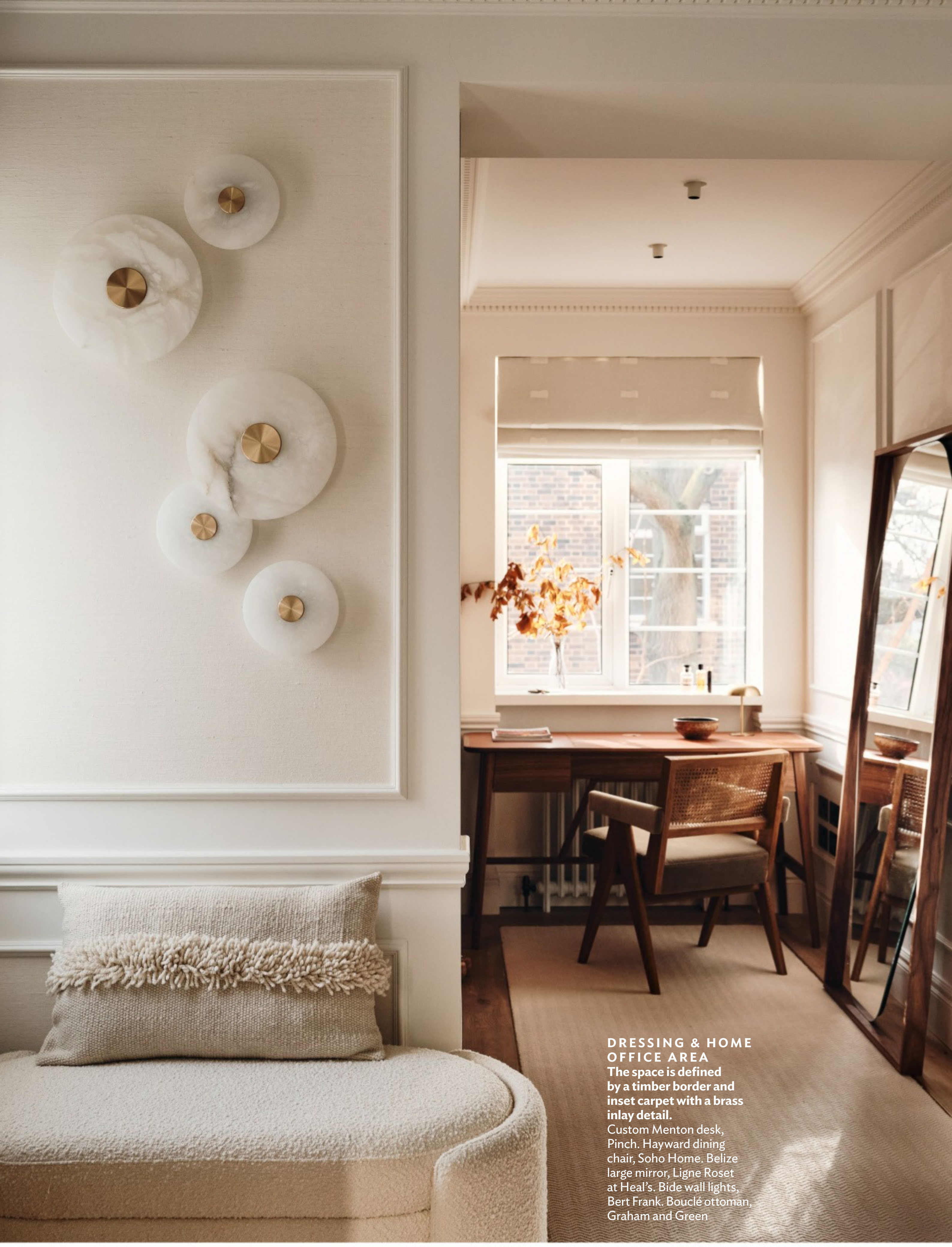
As a result, this home is saturated in texture, from fluted wooden cabinetry to a relaxed mix of materials with a tactile handle. Warm terracotta, wine reds, soft sands and oat tones have earthy appeal. 'This is a home that plays on its series of enclosed spaces, so it suits those cosseting colours,' says Anna.

Above all, there's more room for this family to make new memories. 'Now, in the evening, we sit at the dining table as a family playing our favourite board games,' says the owner. 'Or we retreat to the TV room and simply chill. Our home feels like a sanctuary, while also being the perfect blend of luxe and eco-conscious chic.'

annamoller.design; builderanddecorator.co.uk

EN SUITE
Contrasting tile textures in similar tones create interest and depth.
Old Beige wave porcelain tiles, Porcelanosa. Porcini Emperador honed marble tiles, Mandarin Stone. Vanity unit and Everdon mirrors, Porter. Artes wall lights, CTO Lighting

MAIN BEDROOM
'The woven side table, silk wallpaper and slim mirrors create a space for the adults that is full of warmth,' says Anna.
Bed in Andrew Martin's Pollen Orange by London Upholsterers. Bespoke floating bedside table, Sebastian Cox



DRESSING & HOME OFFICE AREA

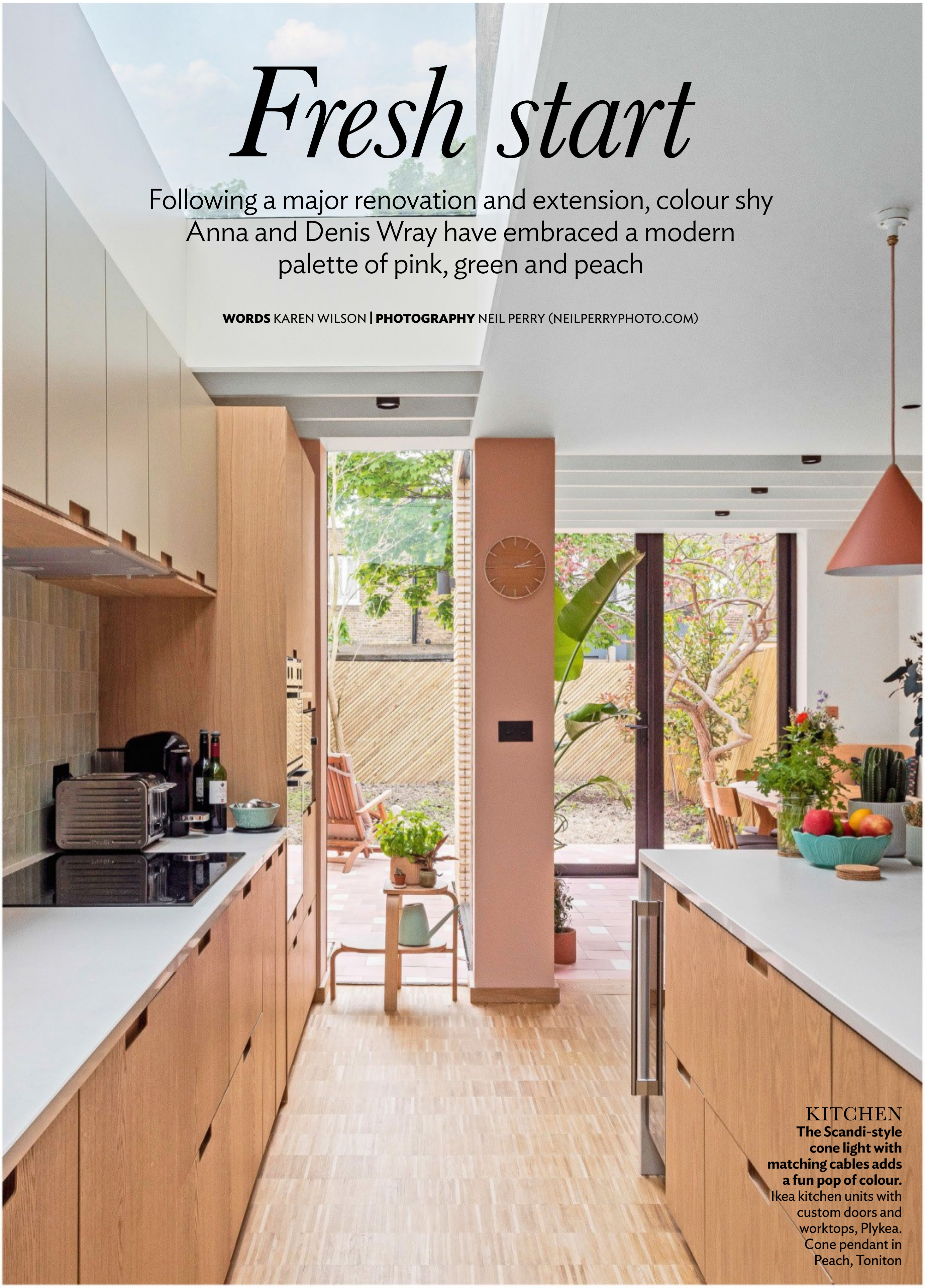
The space is defined by a timber border and inset carpet with a brass inlay detail.

Custom Menton desk, Pinch. Hayward dining chair, Soho Home. Belize large mirror, Ligne Roset at Heal's. Bide wall lights, Bert Frank. Bouclé ottoman, Graham and Green

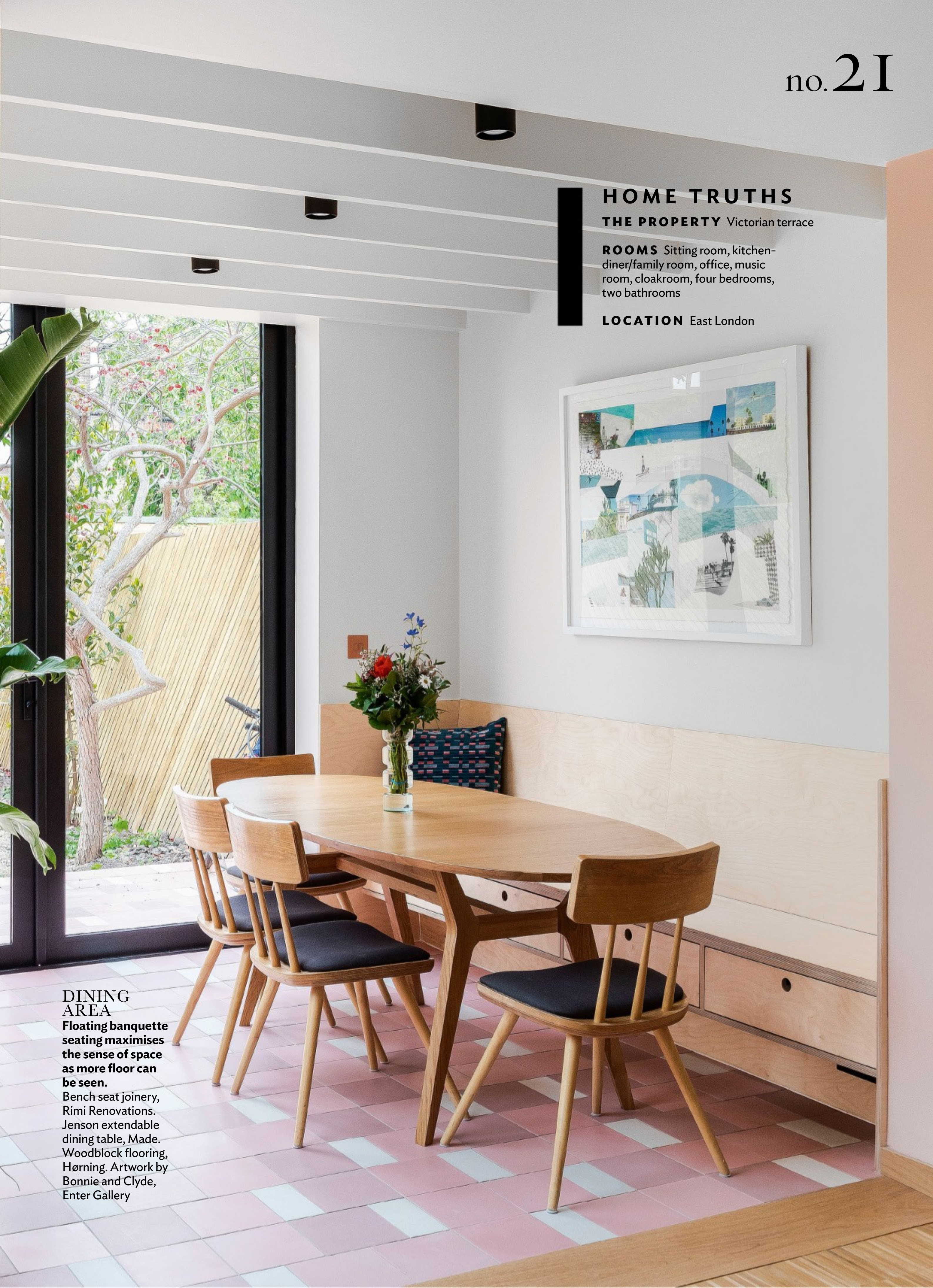
Fresh start

Following a major renovation and extension, colour shy Anna and Denis Wray have embraced a modern palette of pink, green and peach

WORDS KAREN WILSON | **PHOTOGRAPHY** NEIL PERRY (NEILPERRYPHOTO.COM)



KITCHEN
The Scandi-style cone light with matching cables adds a fun pop of colour. Ikea kitchen units with custom doors and worktops, Plykea. Cone pendant in Peach, Toniton



no.21

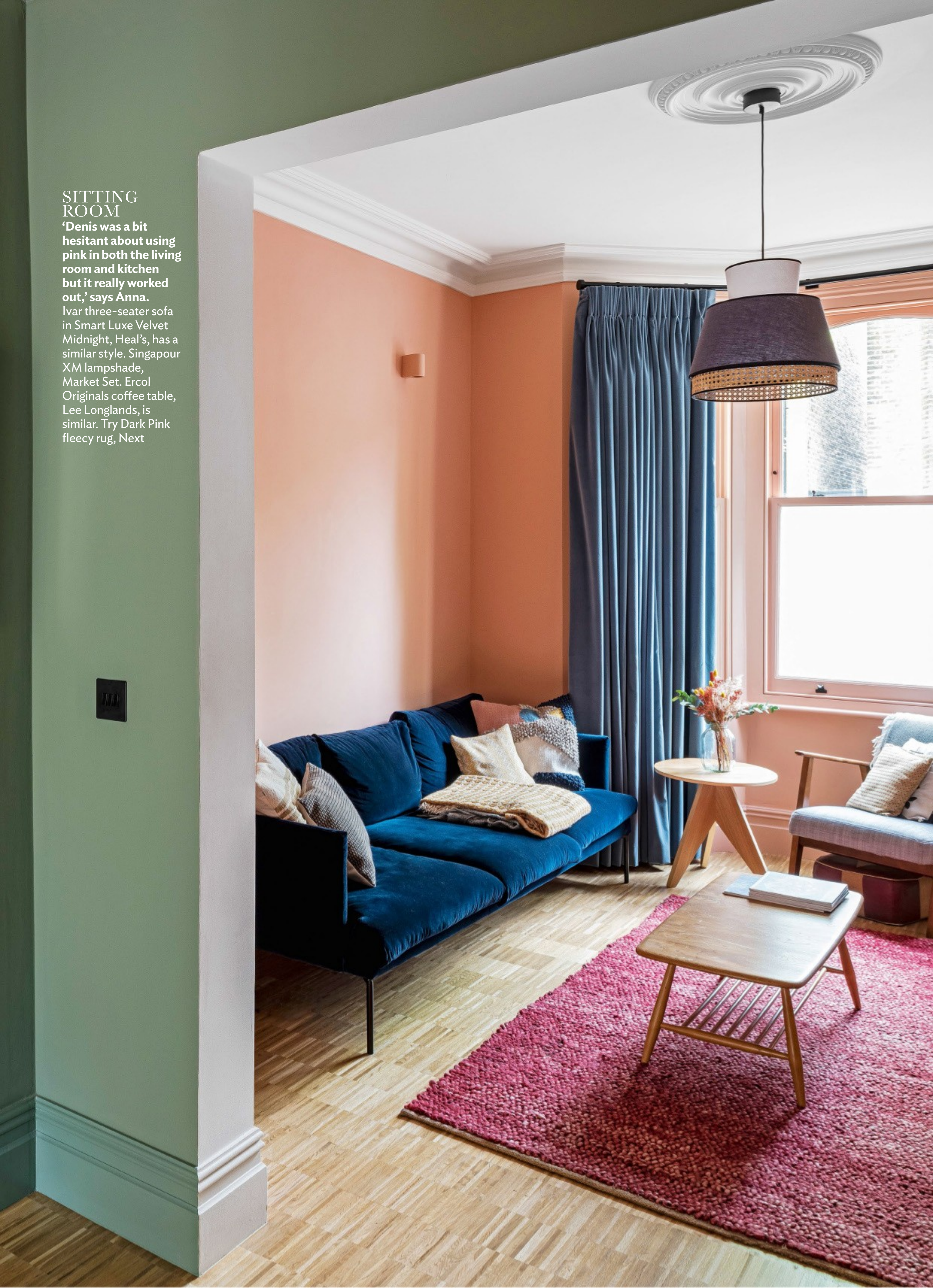
HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Victorian terrace

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner/family room, office, music room, cloakroom, four bedrooms, two bathrooms

LOCATION East London

DINING AREA **Floating banquette seating maximises the sense of space as more floor can be seen.** Bench seat joinery, Rimi Renovations. Jenson extendable dining table, Made. Woodblock flooring, Hørning. Artwork by Bonnie and Clyde, Enter Gallery



SITTING ROOM

'Denis was a bit hesitant about using pink in both the living room and kitchen but it really worked out,' says Anna. Ivar three-seater sofa in Smart Luxe Velvet Midnight, Heal's, has a similar style. Singapour XM lampshade, Market Set. Ercol Originals coffee table, Lee Longlands, is similar. Try Dark Pink fleecy rug, Next

After living in their three-bedroom Victorian terrace for 13 years, Anna and Denis Wray craved more space and a complete refresh.

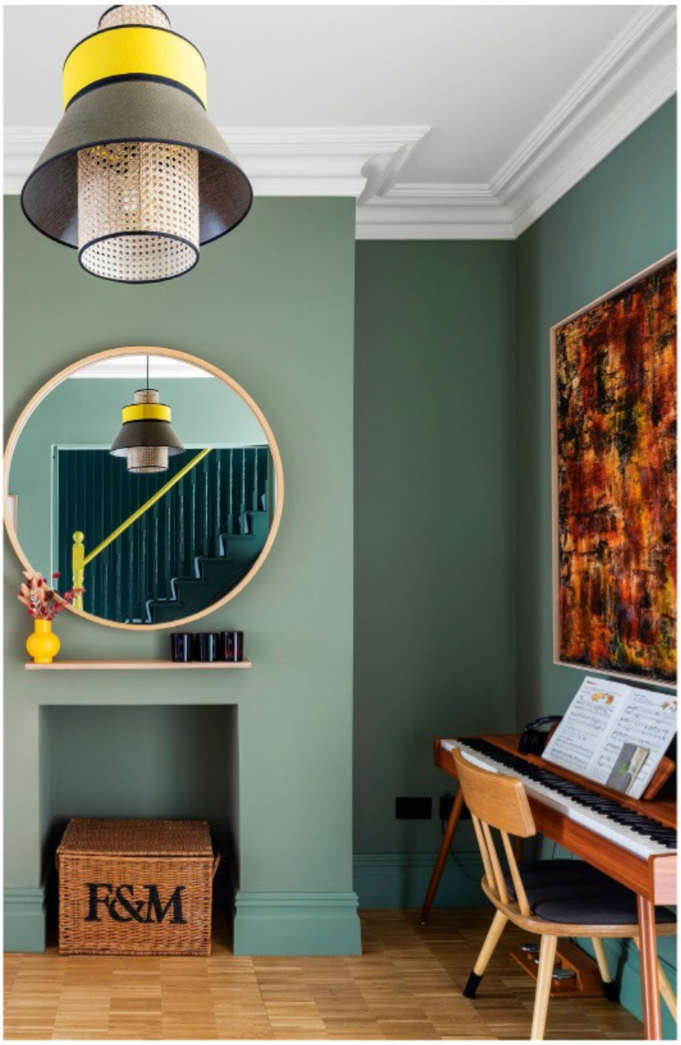
'We'd initially done a budget renovation and knocked through the galley kitchen, but it was still freezing and dark even though it's south-facing,' says Anna. 'Everything was broken and we were fed up.'

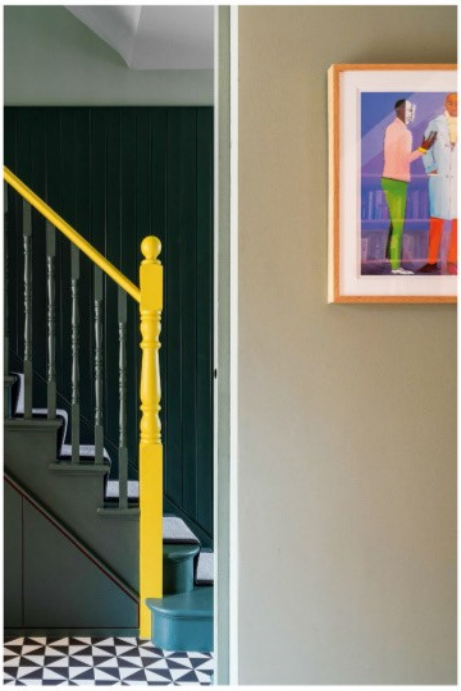
Just before lockdown, the couple asked architect James Dale for ideas on reconfiguring and extending the house but were worried they wouldn't gain enough extra space to warrant the investment.

'We decided to move instead but after making several offers, nothing worked out,' says Anna. 'So we returned to James after lockdown to get plans drawn up because we love our street and neighbours and could no longer see the point in moving.'

Following a seven-month renovation project by Rimi Renovations in 2021, which included extending to the side and rear, as well as converting the loft, the house now works much better for family life. Although fully open-plan downstairs, two sets of pocket doors allow areas to be zoned off, including the former dining room in the middle where children Eadie, 14, and Sammy, 12, have piano lessons.

On the first floor the awkward shaped bathroom with diagonal wall has been squared off, while removing a chimney breast in Eadie's bedroom has made furniture placement easier. The new top floor with dormer window comprises Anna and Denis' bedroom, an office and, at James' suggestion, a shower room that anyone can access rather than an en suite. 'I absolutely love it up here,' says Anna. 'There's lots of pale wood everywhere and it feels really peaceful.'



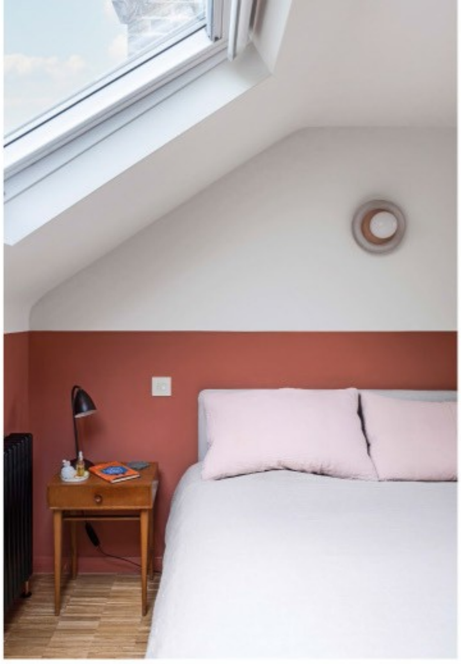


MUSIC ROOM

Punchy yellow elements bring life to the dark green walls.
Walls in Green 02, Lick. Singapour ML pendant lamp, Market Set

HALLWAY

'I'd seen a black and white carpet with a yellow trim online and it inspired the pop of yellow on the staircase,' says Anna.
Darlington floor tiles, Topps Tiles. Spindles in Deep Green 07, Toniton. Banister and newel post in Hustle at 5pm, Fired Earth. *Cover the Surface* art print by Lubaina Himid, Tate Shop



As finance director of a drama production company, the office has been a game changer for Denis. 'It's really nice to have all of that upstairs and away from the living space.'

Anna's favourite room is the kitchen-diner with its oak and Formica Plykea design. James has incorporated many practical additions here, such as a cloakroom and hidden utility cupboard. Also ticked off the wish list was a wine fridge, hot water tap, two larder cupboards and separate integrated full-height fridge and freezer. 'The main thing was having a lovely big island with a really nice waterfall worktop as the social hub,' explains Anna. 'The amount of light that is brought in through the bespoke glazing is fantastic.'

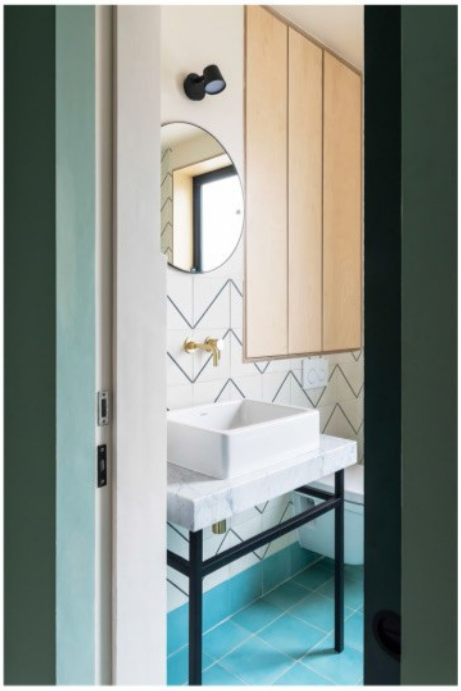
Although neutrals featured heavily in their initial 2007 makeover, this time around Anna was keen to introduce more colour. 'A lot of architects stick to white, grey and wood, but James is very much into colour and that mid-century vibe,' she says.

Anna's friend, colour consultant Emma Merry of Home Milk, was another major source of guidance, complementing Anna's background in fashion and costume design.

The interior is a far cry from that of Anna and Denis' first home, a tiny one-bedroom flat in Camden, which featured heavy oak furniture, reclaimed pub tables and church chairs. 'I used to hate birch ply but now I love the bespoke built-in cabinetry,' she smiles.

For would-be renovators, Anna advises doing as much research as possible and getting a plethora of samples to examine in different lights. 'Have a contingency, be realistic and know what you're willing to compromise on,' she adds. 'One day we might move to Spain but I'm so glad we stayed and did the work as this is definitely our forever home in England.' ㉕

jamesdalearchitects.com; rimirenovations.com; homemilk.co.uk



LANDING
'A large roof light was indulgent but it floods the area with light,' says Anna. Walls in Pistage 02, Toniton. *Chelsea Girls* remake poster by Siggi Eggertsson

MAIN BEDROOM
Lighter paint on top makes the room look more spacious. Walls in Red Earth and Skimming Stone, both Farrow & Ball

BATHROOM
Wall-mounted taps teamed with birch ply storage give a contemporary look. Basin, Duravit. For similar wall tiles, try Milan Amazon marble mosaic, Ca' Pietra

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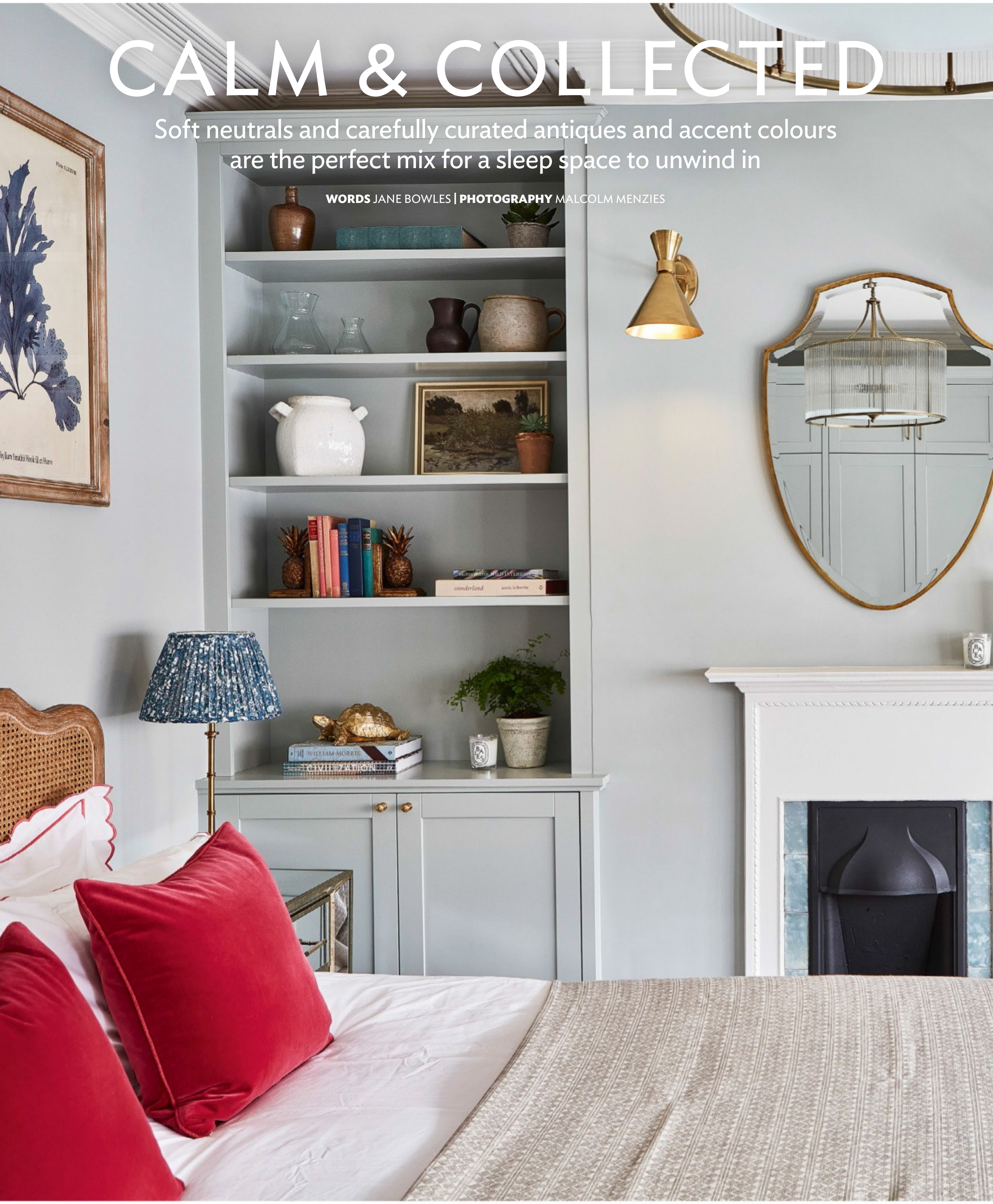
CALM & COLLECTED

Soft neutrals and carefully curated antiques and accent colours are the perfect mix for a sleep space to unwind in

WORDS JANE BOWLES | **PHOTOGRAPHY** MALCOLM MENZIES



no.22

‘I was asked to redesign this main bedroom as part of a whole house renovation,’ says designer Polly Ashman. ‘The owners wanted to create a retreat from their busy life.’ The brief was a calm and neutral scheme with lots of textures.

1 KEEPING IT CALM

Happily, little structural work was required, so the remodel began with repainting the walls and ceiling. ‘I chose a light blue wall colour to enhance the sense of light and space and establish a calming ambience,’ says Polly. She also commissioned large bespoke fitted wardrobes to maximise her clients’ storage and keep the space looking clear and clutter-free.

2 MIXING OLD AND NEW

To add a period feel, opt for original features in keeping with the age of the property. The Victorian cast-iron fireplace was specially sourced and installed and created a low-key yet interesting focal point. The traditional wood and rattan bed frame also added a period touch. ‘There’s no reason not to mix vintage furniture and antiques with modern high-street pieces and bespoke joinery,’ says Polly.

3 LAYER IT UP

The starting point for the soft furnishings was the textured armchair fabric; Polly then set about layering fabrics and textures to create added visual interest. ‘Start with the fabric or item you absolutely love and go from there,’ she advises. ‘Pick out the colours in the main fabric and source other fabrics to complement it. Make sure that the textures are different and nothing feels too matchy-matchy.’

4 SOURCING ANTIQUES

Skilfully curated antiques can add warmth and contrast to predominantly neutral interior schemes like this bedroom. ‘I enjoy sourcing antiques and vintage pieces for my clients. I’m always going to car boot sales and charity shops. I also love antique fairs and online auction sites, such as the-saleroom.com,’ says Polly.

RESTFUL RETREAT

Calming pale blue walls and neutral layered fabrics set the mood for relaxation in this remodelled main bedroom, the perfect retreat for Polly’s clients, who are parents of twins. ‘The owners say how peaceful the space feels now – it’s a sanctuary, where they can escape from their busy lives.’ **Walls** and **joinery** in Light Blue, Farrow & Ball. Quantock **bedspread**, Fermoie. Similar Empire **lampshade** in Blue Turkish Fish Scales, Pooky. Seaweed framed **prints**, Oka, are similar. Try Betty **armchair**, Sofa.com. Varese Scarlet & Bright Fuchsia velvet **cushions**, Designers Guild, have this look

PROJECT DETAILS

DESIGNER
Polly Ashman
(pollyashman.com)

PROPERTY
Victorian terraced house with five bedrooms

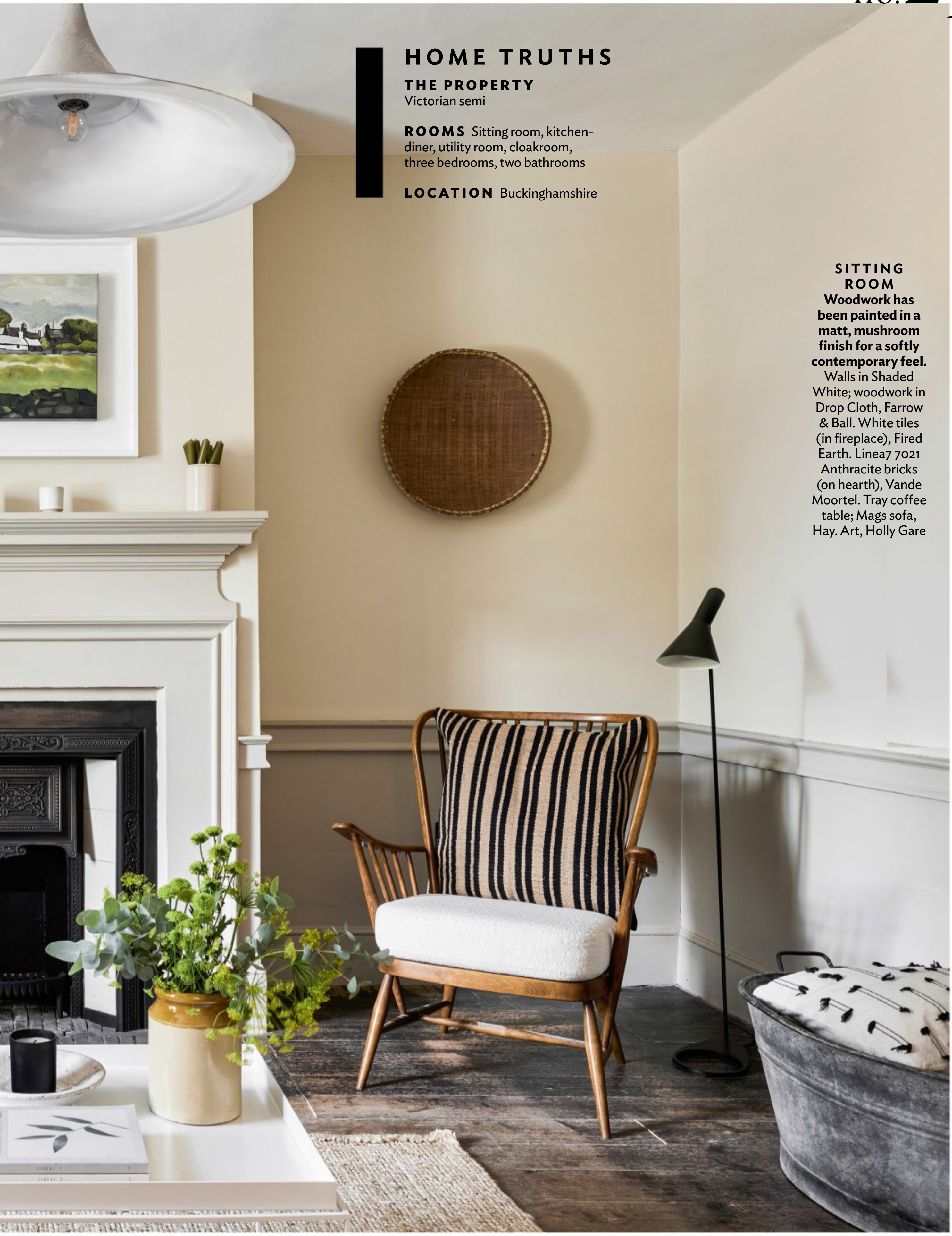
WORK
Bedroom redesign

LOCATION
Southwest London

QUIET beauty

The home of architects Craig Smith and Holly Gare is a lesson in less is more but it took a lot of work to achieve this lovely look

WORDS EMMA J PAGE | **PHOTOGRAPHY** CHRIS SNOOK



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Victorian semi

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner, utility room, cloakroom, three bedrooms, two bathrooms

LOCATION Buckinghamshire

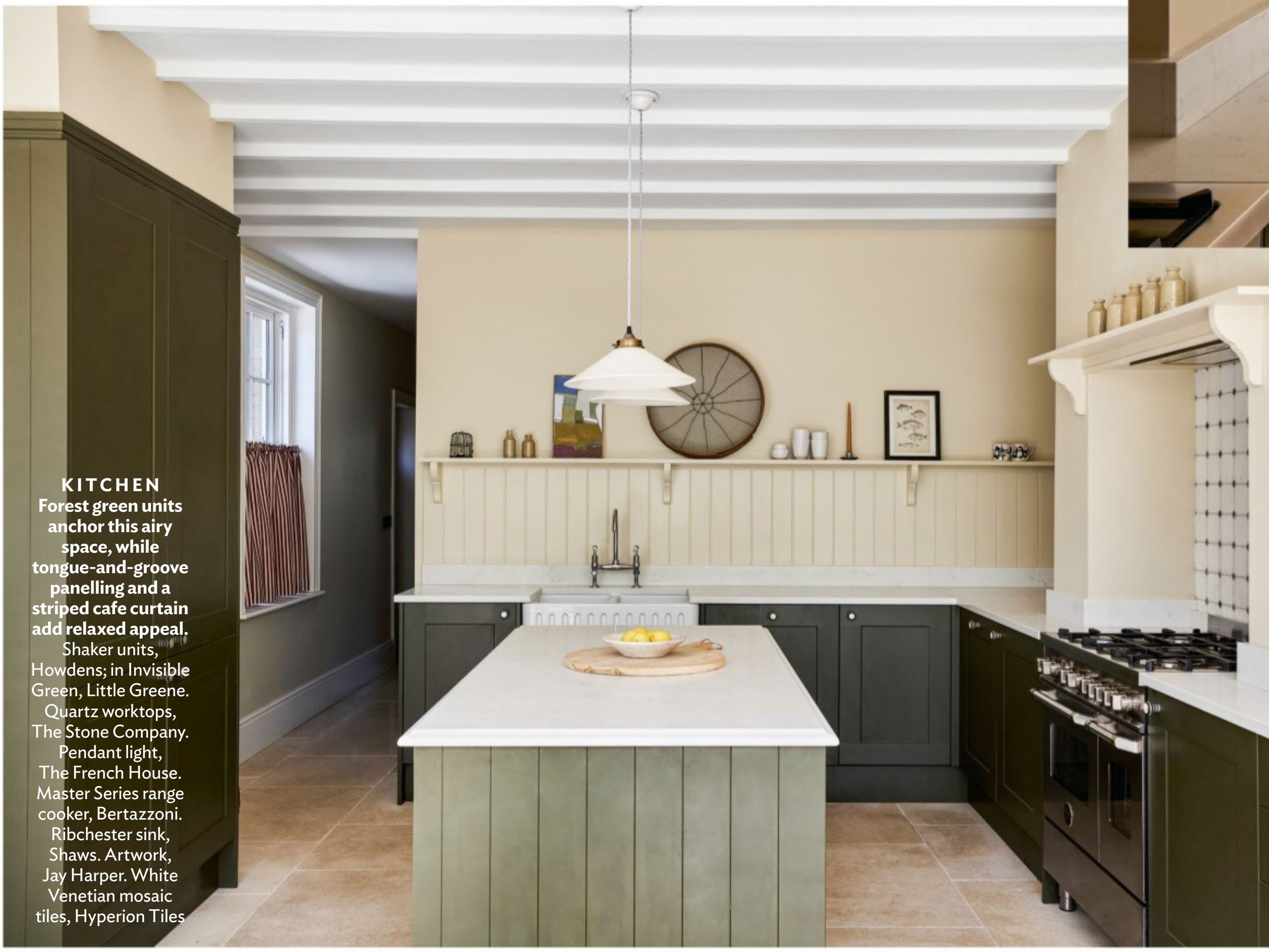
SITTING ROOM **Woodwork has been painted in a matt, mushroom finish for a softly contemporary feel.** Walls in Shaded White; woodwork in Drop Cloth, Farrow & Ball. White tiles (in fireplace), Fired Earth. Linea7 7021 Anthracite bricks (on hearth), Vande Moortel. Tray coffee table; Mags sofa, Hay. Art, Holly Gare

Not many people hit the jackpot first time round when it comes to finding the ideal home, but in the case of architects Craig Smith and Holly Gare, the elegant Victorian house that they occupy was the first and only one that they viewed. 'We'd been searching for somewhere closer to Holly's office in Henley for a while and had saved several options online including this one,' explains Craig. 'When we saw that the price had been reduced, we went to see it. The rest is history.'

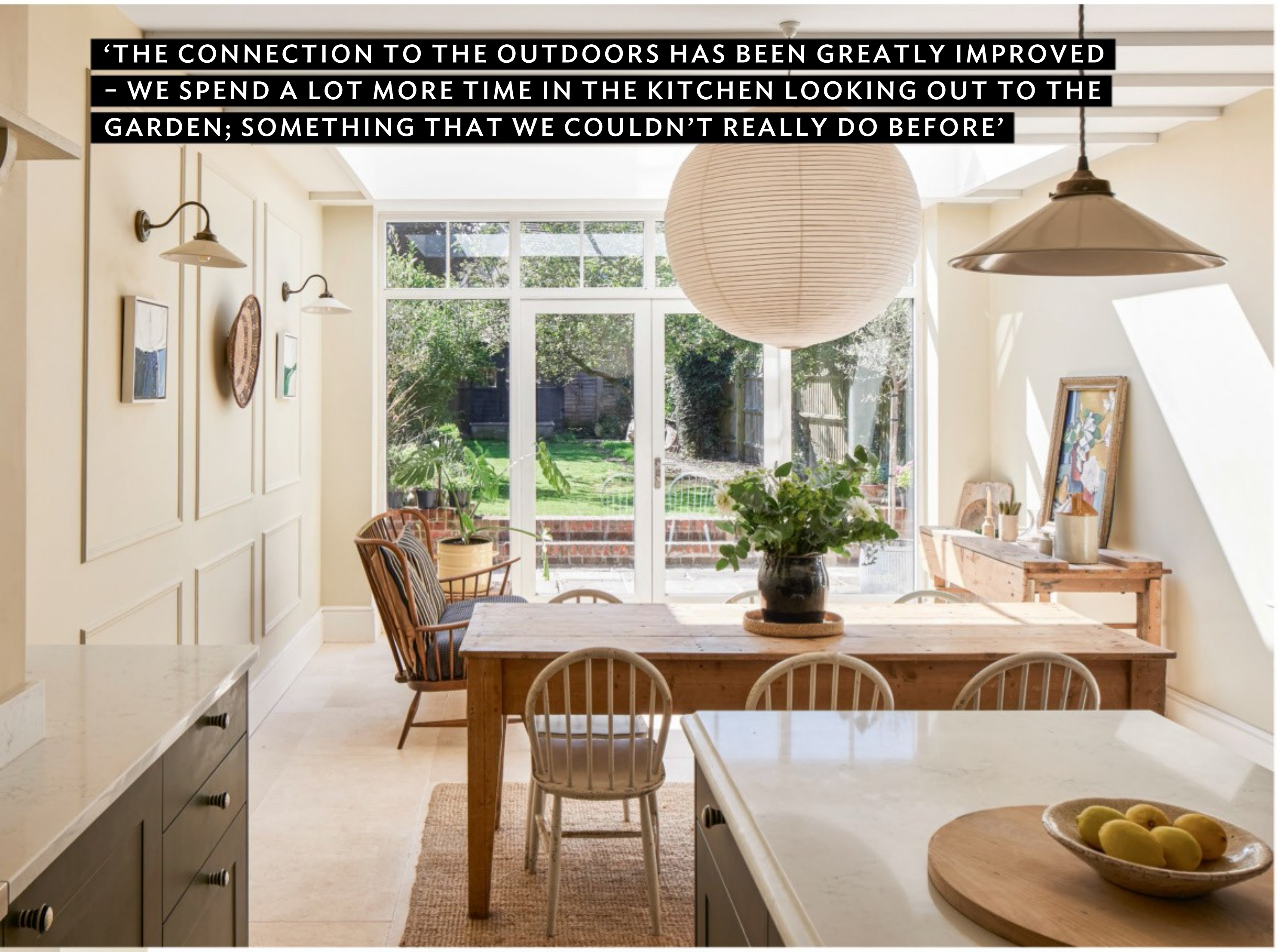
Having both studied at Bath University, the couple share a passion for the city's graceful buildings – in particular, architecture from the Georgian period. The home that they viewed was in fact early Victorian, but its square rooms, high ceilings, sash windows and pared-back decorative elements reminded them of the graceful proportions of their favourite era, despite a less fitting 1960s rear addition. 'The place hadn't been lived in for nearly a decade and fronds from the back garden were creeping under the rear door,' explains Holly. 'The two-storey addition had not been sympathetically carried out either, resulting in an unintuitive layout. There was little connection to the garden, while upstairs, the bathroom could only be reached by walking through two bedrooms.'

Undeterred, the couple retreated to their local pub after their viewing and, on a napkin, sketched out an ambitious plan to unlock the interior's potential. Unsurprisingly, for two architects with laser focus, that plan remained unaltered when it was fully realised three years later. 'We wanted to return a sense of elegance to the building, simplifying it down to the core, without losing what we loved,' explains Craig. 'Inspired by hotels such as Heckfield Place, we were keen to marry old and new together harmoniously.'

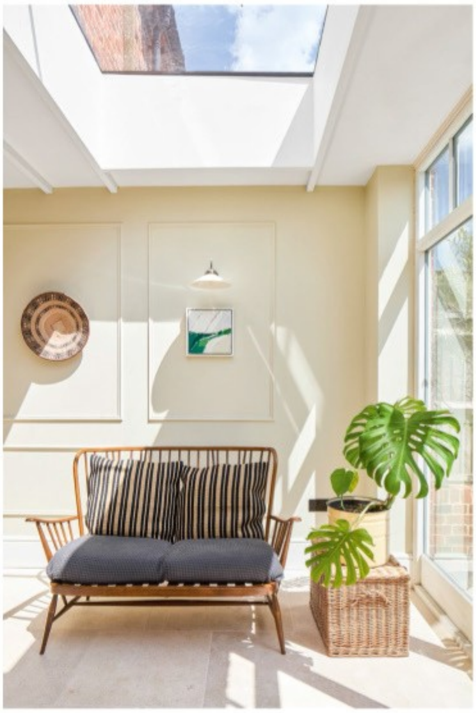
Built by a local paper mill owner, the couple's home is part of a property that neatly divides into two mirroring halves – one side originally for working in and one for sleeping in. Holly and Craig's home was once the working side of the property, conveniently



KITCHEN
Forest green units anchor this airy space, while tongue-and-groove panelling and a striped cafe curtain add relaxed appeal. Shaker units, Howdens; in Invisible Green, Little Greene. Quartz worktops, The Stone Company. Pendant light, The French House. Master Series range cooker, Bertazzoni. Ribchester sink, Shaws. Artwork, Jay Harper. White Venetian mosaic tiles, Hyperion Tiles

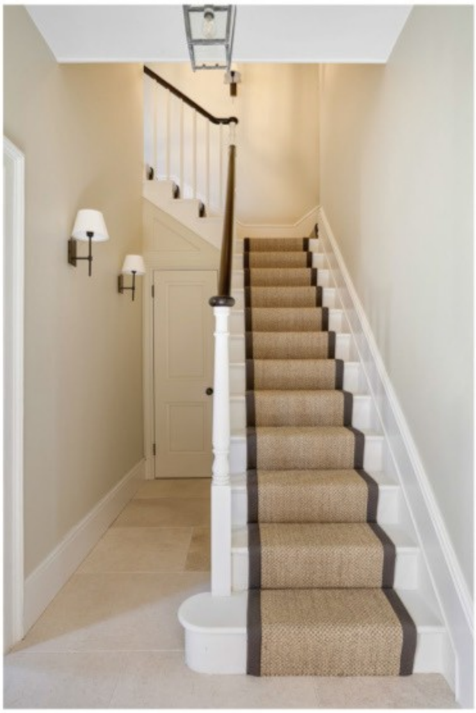


‘THE CONNECTION TO THE OUTDOORS HAS BEEN GREATLY IMPROVED – WE SPEND A LOT MORE TIME IN THE KITCHEN LOOKING OUT TO THE GARDEN; SOMETHING THAT WE COULDN’T REALLY DO BEFORE’

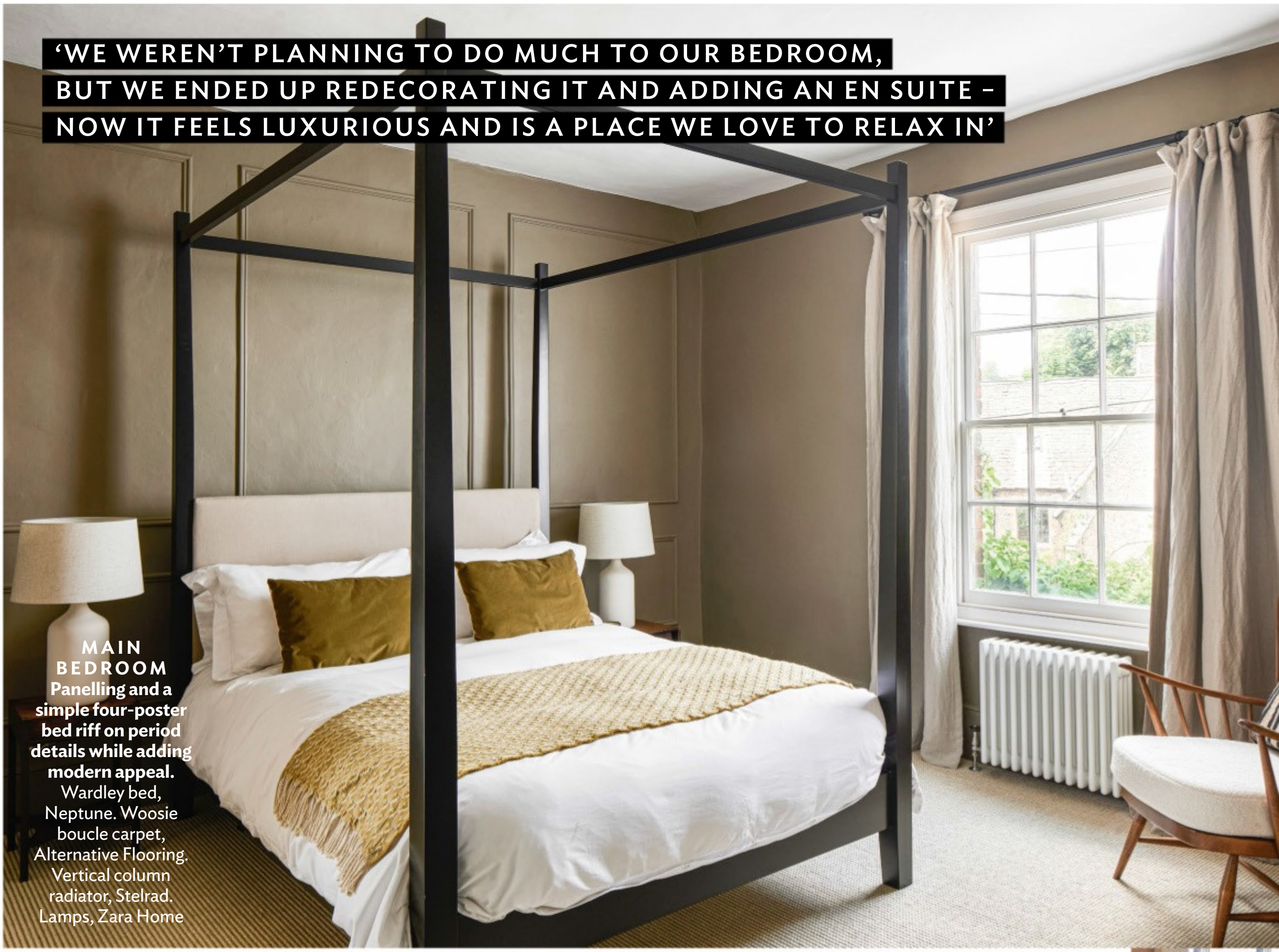


DINING AREA
Elegant panelling and classic Ercol chairs lend this new part of the home a lived-in feel. Roof light, County Glass and Glazing. Walls in Off-White, Farrow & Ball. Ceiling in Linen Wash, Little Greene. Painting, Martha Holmes. Light Jerusalem tumbled limestone flooring, Floors of Stone

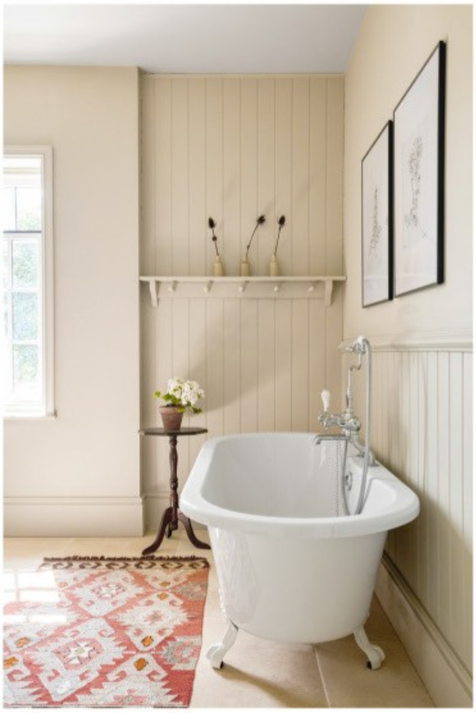
ENTRANCE HALL
An earthy runner echoes the kitchen colour scheme for a cohesive feel. Staircase, CAD Stairs; in Linen Wash, Little Greene. Sisal Malay Tongli runner, Alternative Flooring



‘WE WEREN’T PLANNING TO DO MUCH TO OUR BEDROOM, BUT WE ENDED UP REDECORATING IT AND ADDING AN EN SUITE – NOW IT FEELS LUXURIOUS AND IS A PLACE WE LOVE TO RELAX IN’

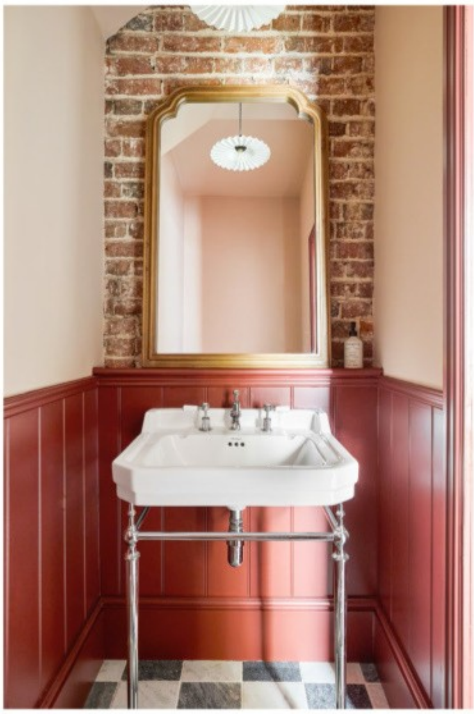


MAIN BEDROOM
Panelling and a simple four-poster bed riff on period details while adding modern appeal. Wardley bed, Neptune. Woosie boucle carpet, Alternative Flooring. Vertical column radiator, Stelrad. Lamps, Zara Home



BATHROOM
‘We wanted this to feel like any other room, rather than a utilitarian zone,’ says Craig. Walls in Portland Stone, Little Greene. Bath, Burlington Bathrooms. Rug, Rug Addiction

CLOAKROOM
Red panelling complements the exposed brickwork, while a large mirror helps to make the space feel bigger. Walls in Setting Plaster, Farrow & Ball. Woodwork in Refectory Red, deVOL. Talis tumbled marble floor tiles, Floors of Stone. Basin, Burlington Bathrooms. Mirror, Biggie Best



located close to the mill in case of sudden fire. 'There were certain period elements that we were keen to preserve, such as fireplaces and joinery, plus floorboards and ceiling heights,' explains Holly. 'But the awkward layout may be down to the fact that it wasn't originally designed as a domestic home.'

The pair's reconfiguration saw them taking down the 1960s rear extension, replacing it with a two-storey reclaimed brick addition, resulting in a generous kitchen, while a cloakroom and utility room were created out of the former dining room. They also removed the original Victorian staircase and replaced and repositioned it, enabling the first floor to be entirely reworked, so that a new landing now allows for easy individual access to three bedrooms, plus a family bathroom and en suite. 'The new staircase was key to the plan's success, but of course we were hesitant about it,' says Holly. 'We were determined to reinstate something that would have been worthy of the original. The new staircase looks as though it has always been there – it is narrower, but we paid close attention to joinery details, stair shape and risers.'

That attention to detail also plays out in the decor, with its less-is-more aesthetic and an emphasis on easy neutrals, which become progressively warm as rooms transition from south- to north-facing, from back to front. The addition of panelling, such as in the kitchen, softens the new areas, while fireplaces and joinery have been restored and finished in softly contemporary chalky shades. 'We didn't want to be slaves to the era,' says Craig. 'Instead we paired design classics, such as Ercol chairs, with modern pieces, including pendants by Gubi.' Graphic lines, such as the four-poster bed, or the chequered flooring in the utility, nod to the couple's love of pared-back simplicity. 'It's been wonderful to restore this home to its former glory while adding a modern touch,' says Holly. 'There's something special about a considered mix of old and new. You can't write a formula for it and that's part of its magic.'

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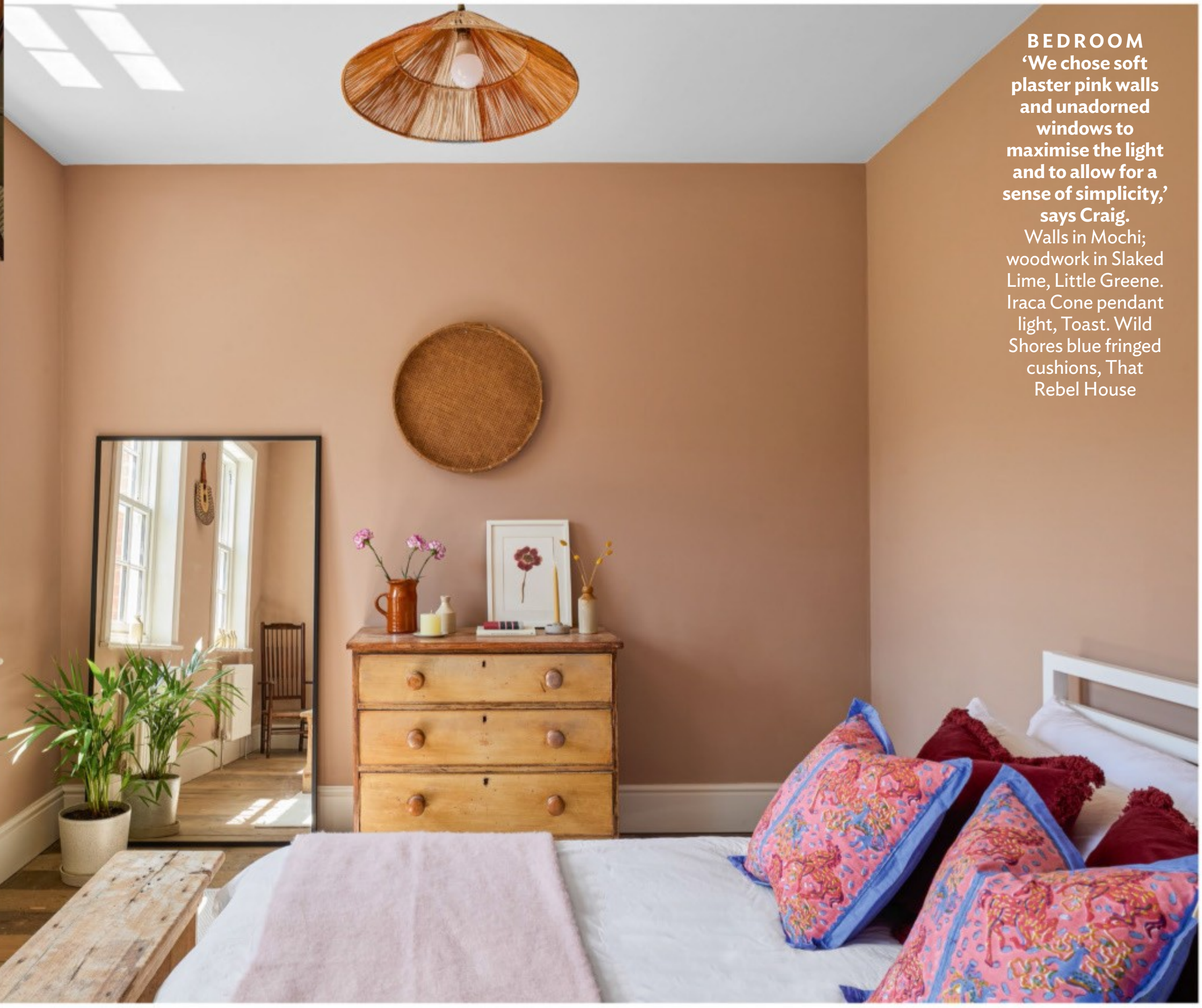
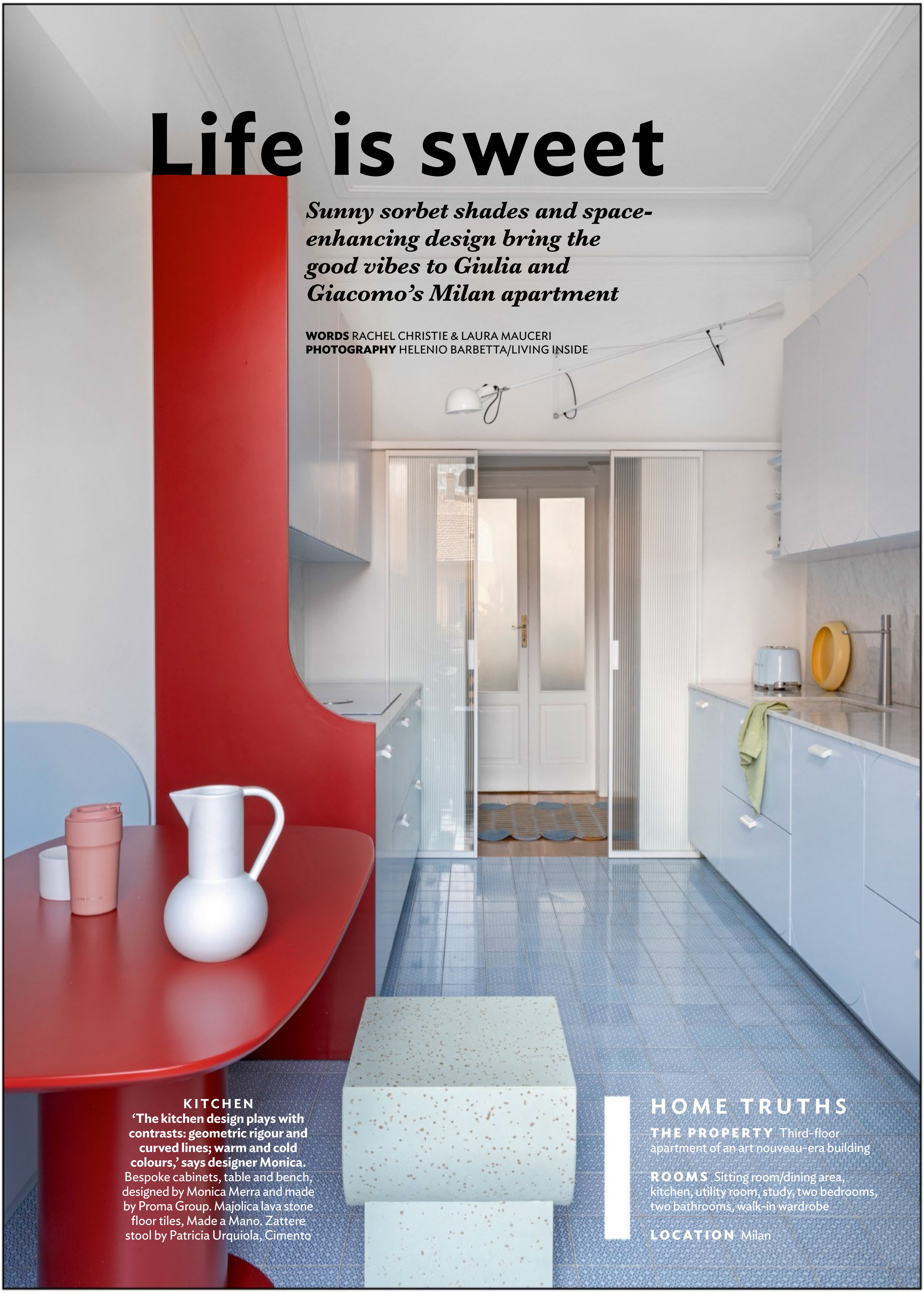


BEDROOM
'We chose soft plaster pink walls and unadorned windows to maximise the light and to allow for a sense of simplicity,' says Craig. Walls in Mochi; woodwork in Slaked Lime, Little Greene. Iraca Cone pendant light, Toast. Wild Shores blue fringed cushions, That Rebel House

Life is sweet

Sunny sorbet shades and space-enhancing design bring the good vibes to Giulia and Giacomo's Milan apartment

WORDS RACHEL CHRISTIE & LAURA MAUCERI
PHOTOGRAPHY HELENIO BARBETTA/LIVING INSIDE



KITCHEN
'The kitchen design plays with contrasts: geometric rigour and curved lines; warm and cold colours,' says designer Monica. Bespoke cabinets, table and bench, designed by Monica Merra and made by Proma Group. Majolica lava stone floor tiles, Made a Mano. Zattere stool by Patricia Urquiola, Cimento

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Third-floor apartment of an art nouveau-era building

ROOMS Sitting room/dining area, kitchen, utility room, study, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, walk-in wardrobe

LOCATION Milan

no.24

Hailing originally from the hills of Tuscany, Giulia and Giacomo made the move into Milan's hip Isola district when, in 2019, they fell in love at first sight with an apartment located in a art nouveau-era building. North of Porta Garibaldi station and next to Porta Nuovo, Isola is the perfect blend of old Milan, with its historic houses and 'smart' metropolitan vibe, and the new – artisan shops, vintage stores, chic restaurants and cool bars.

Although the apartment had been renovated a decade before, as parents to two young children, Sveva, age five, and Giovanni, three, the couple needed it updated a little in order to function better for family living. So they consulted a family friend, Monica Merra, who owns the architecture and interior design practice, Ameno Architettura. 'The previous renovation had eliminated many of the original, more distinctive elements of the apartment,' says Monica. 'The space felt somewhat disconnected from its historical charm, and, overall, it was not well-suited for a young family.'

Monica officially started the project in February 2020 and then the pandemic hit. 'I still think back to the lockdown and the difficulties of the first weeks of construction and the subsequent one-month hiatus, with the inevitable delays that ensued,' she says. 'Despite the challenges, I have pleasant memories of the daily walk through a strangely silent metropolis to reach the construction site.'

Initially the renovation was meant to be minor, with a focus on remodelling the bathrooms, treating the original parquet and

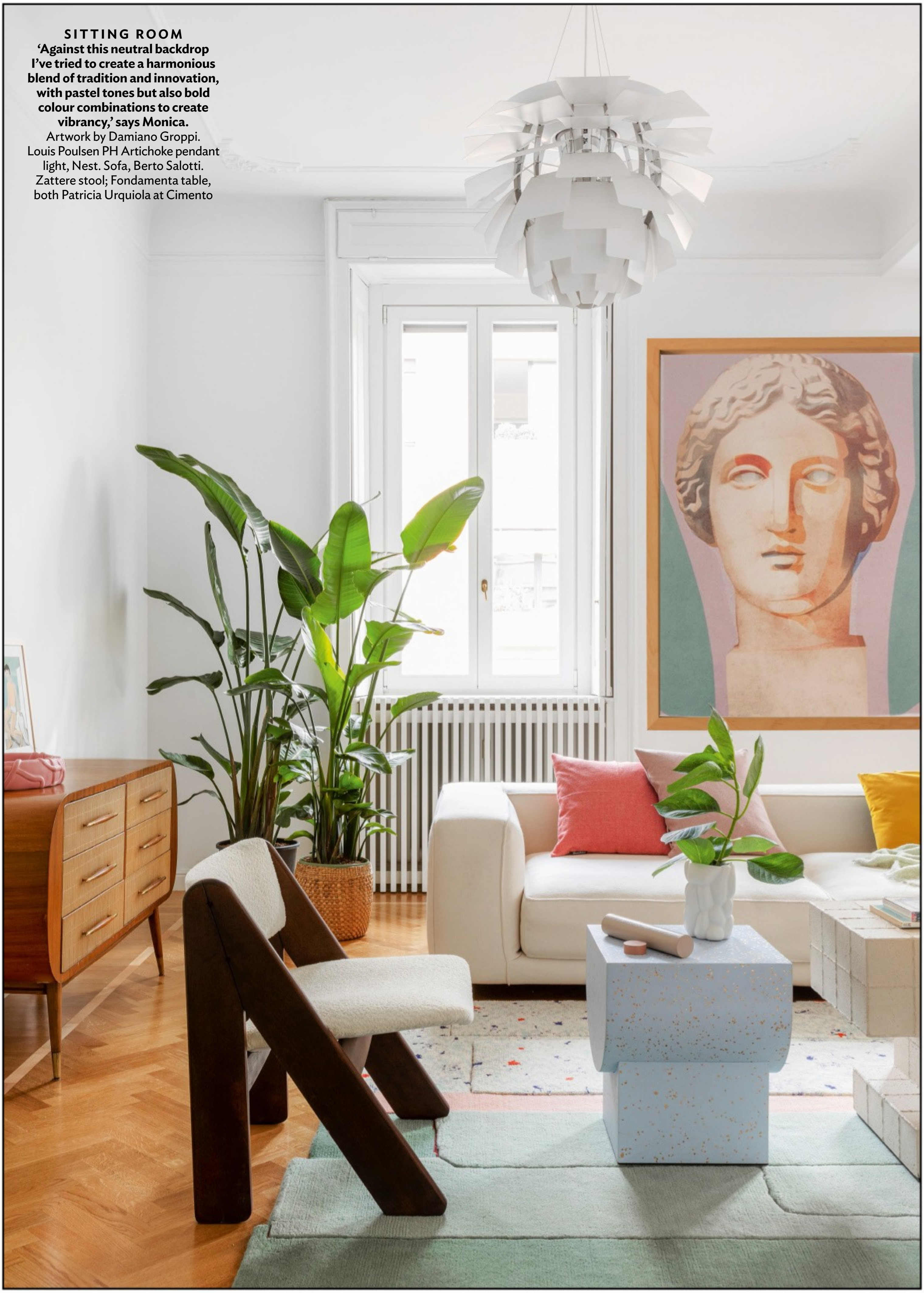
DINING AREA
'I wanted to bring out the retro charm that characterises this type of architecture, without sacrificing functionality,' says designer Monica Merra.
Similar Sedie Anni 1950s chairs, Vinterior. Novamobili Torii dining table, Go Modern

SITTING ROOM
All choices regarding furnishings, from design icons to vintage pieces, were made to enhance what remained of the past.
Vintage Margherita bamboo armchair by Franco Albini, 8 Holland Street. Patcha rug by Patricia Urquiola for CC Tapis, Monologue

> 'A PAINTED DIVIDER BETWEEN THE KITCHEN UNITS AND TABLE HELPS DEFINE THE BREAKFAST NOOK AND DELIVERS PLENTY OF CHARACTER'

SITTING ROOM

'Against this neutral backdrop I've tried to create a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, with pastel tones but also bold colour combinations to create vibrancy,' says Monica. Artwork by Damiano Groppi. Louis Poulsen PH Artichoke pendant light, Nest. Sofa, Berto Salotti. Zattere stool; Fondamenta table, both Patricia Urquiola at Cimento



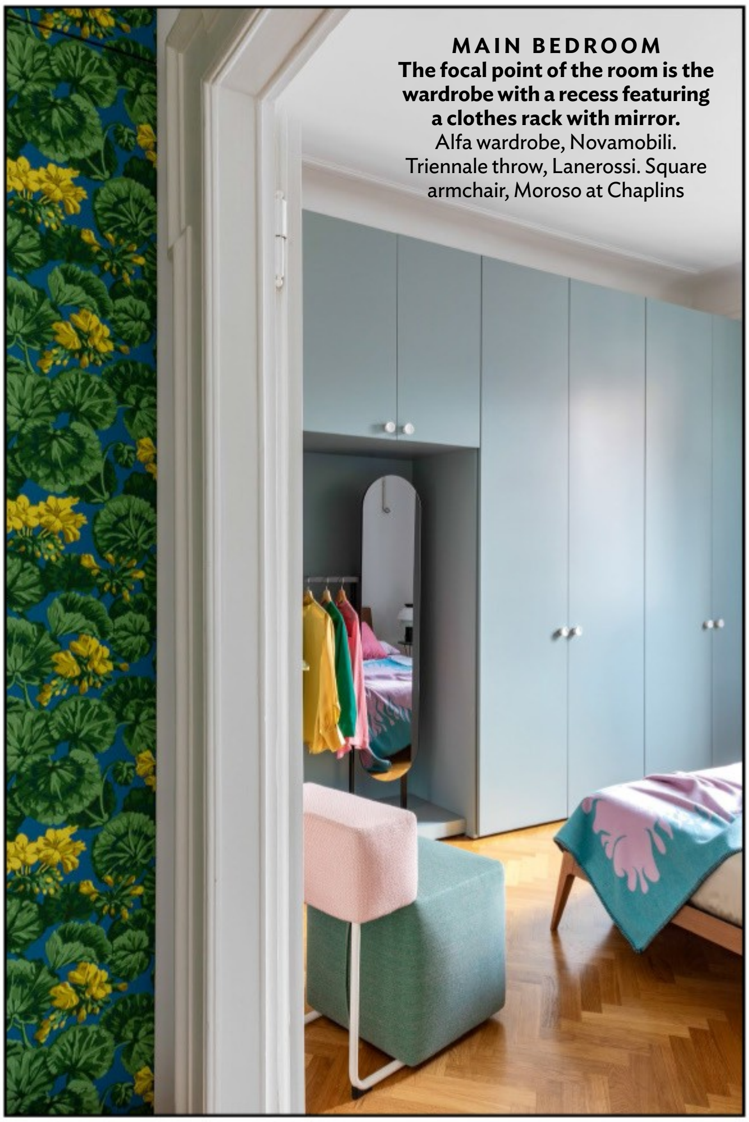
refreshing the paintwork. It quickly evolved into something more substantial when, on closer inspection, Monica discovered that much of the parquet flooring needed replacing. She seized the opportunity to reconfigure the space, making subtle yet impactful changes to improve functionality, while preserving the existing layout.

'To maximise the practicality of the space, I started from the hallway, creating new visual and functional connections by opening previously closed doorways,' she says. 'So, between the large living room, initially only accessible from the entrance, and the kitchen, previously completely isolated from the living area, an opening was created. This connection not only linked the two spaces but also established a visual continuity, which aligns with the couple's sociability.'

Internal doors and the remaining decorative plaster detailing were preserved, respecting the original spirit of the apartment, while a simple, pastel-coloured design was born – the only exception being the bold tones of the wallpaper sited at the end of the hallway; 'Wallpaper is never missing in my projects,' says Monica.

The pretty, Parisian-inspired, pale-toned background provides a neutral canvas for an edited selection of iconic pieces of furniture, which seamlessly integrate with custom-made designs and clever storage solutions. 'Every client has their own taste, every space has its soul and its story,' says Monica. 'But it's the obsession with details and combinations of textures, colours and finishes that connect all my work.' ㉕

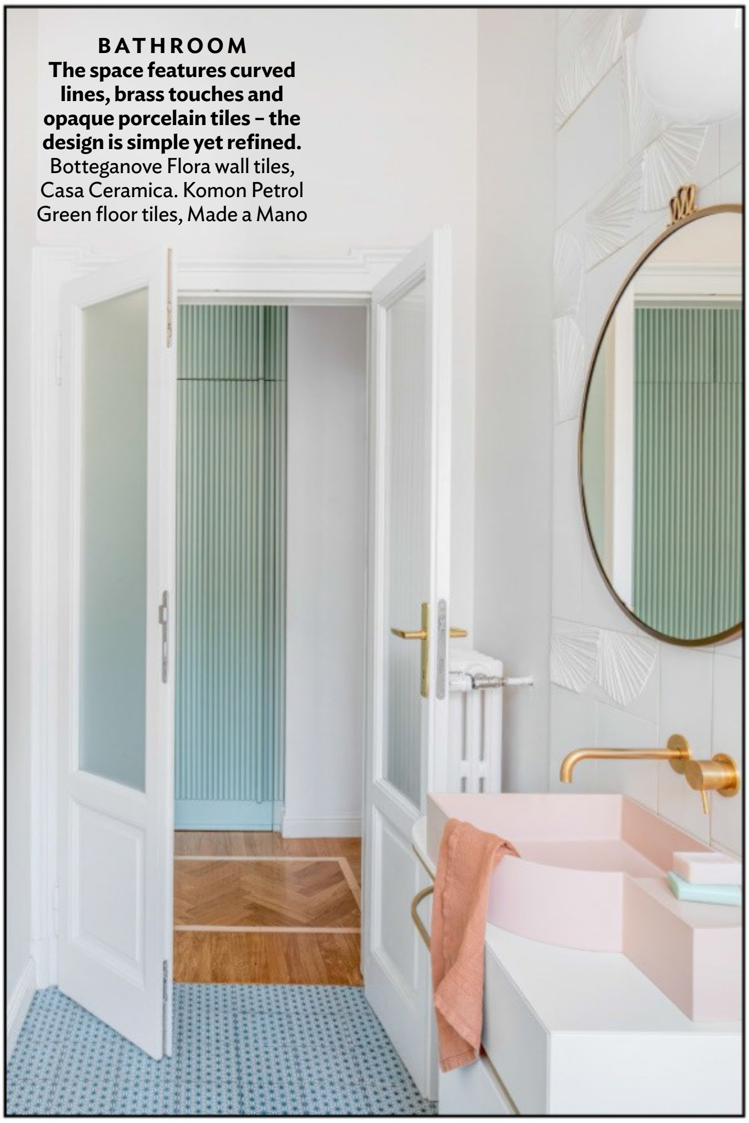
amenoarchitettura.com



MAIN BEDROOM

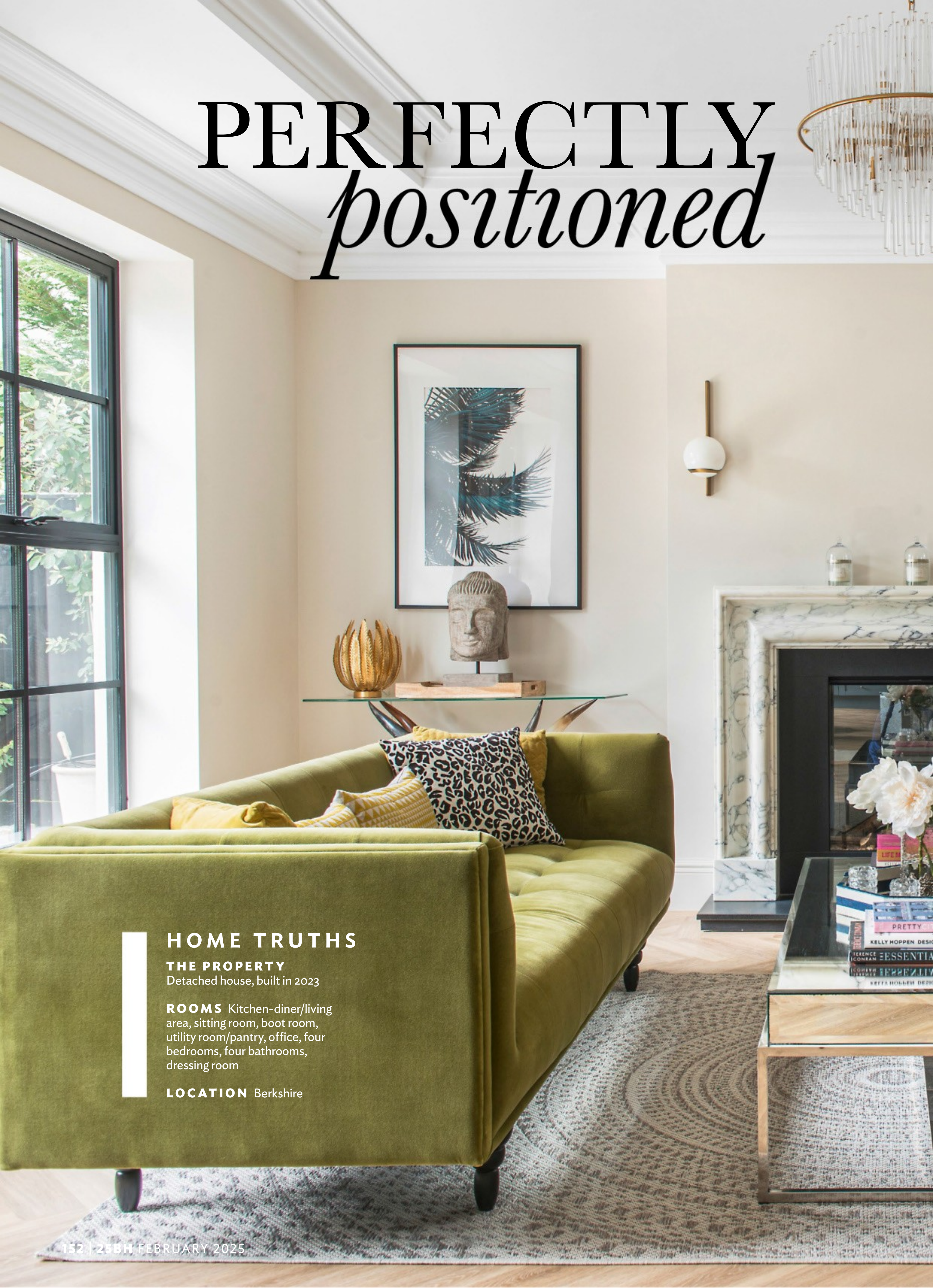
The focal point of the room is the wardrobe with a recess featuring a clothes rack with mirror. Alfa wardrobe, Novamobili. Triennale throw, Lanerossi. Square armchair, Moroso at Chaplins

'ADDING A RECESS TO A WARDROBE CREATES A MODERN FURNITURE SOLUTION, MAKING WALL-TO-WALL CONFIGURATIONS FEEL LIGHTER'



BATHROOM

The space features curved lines, brass touches and opaque porcelain tiles – the design is simple yet refined. Botteganove Flora wall tiles, Casa Ceramica. Komon Petrol Green floor tiles, Made a Mano



PERFECTLY *positioned*

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Detached house, built in 2023

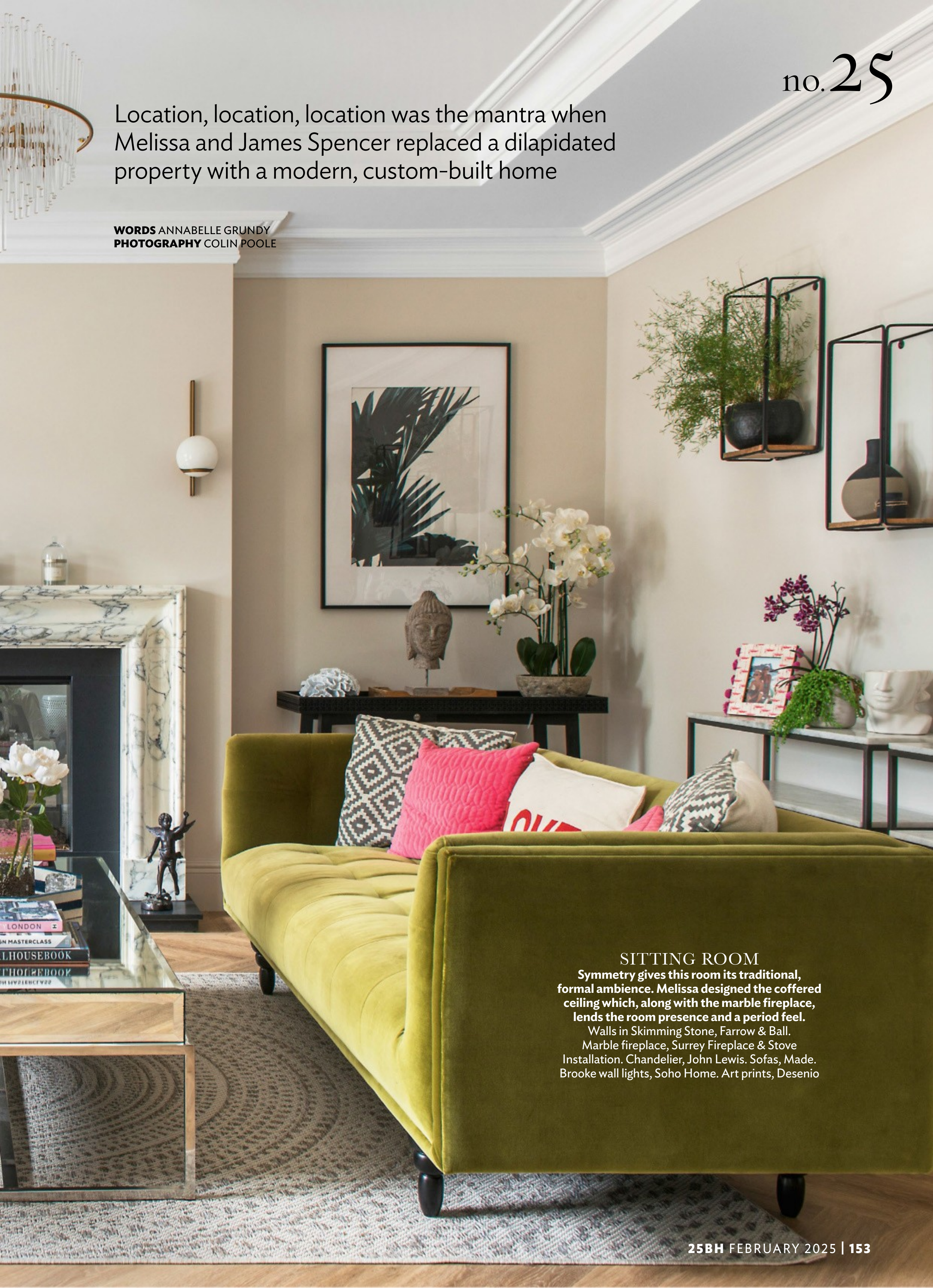
ROOMS Kitchen-diner/living area, sitting room, boot room, utility room/pantry, office, four bedrooms, four bathrooms, dressing room

LOCATION Berkshire

no.25

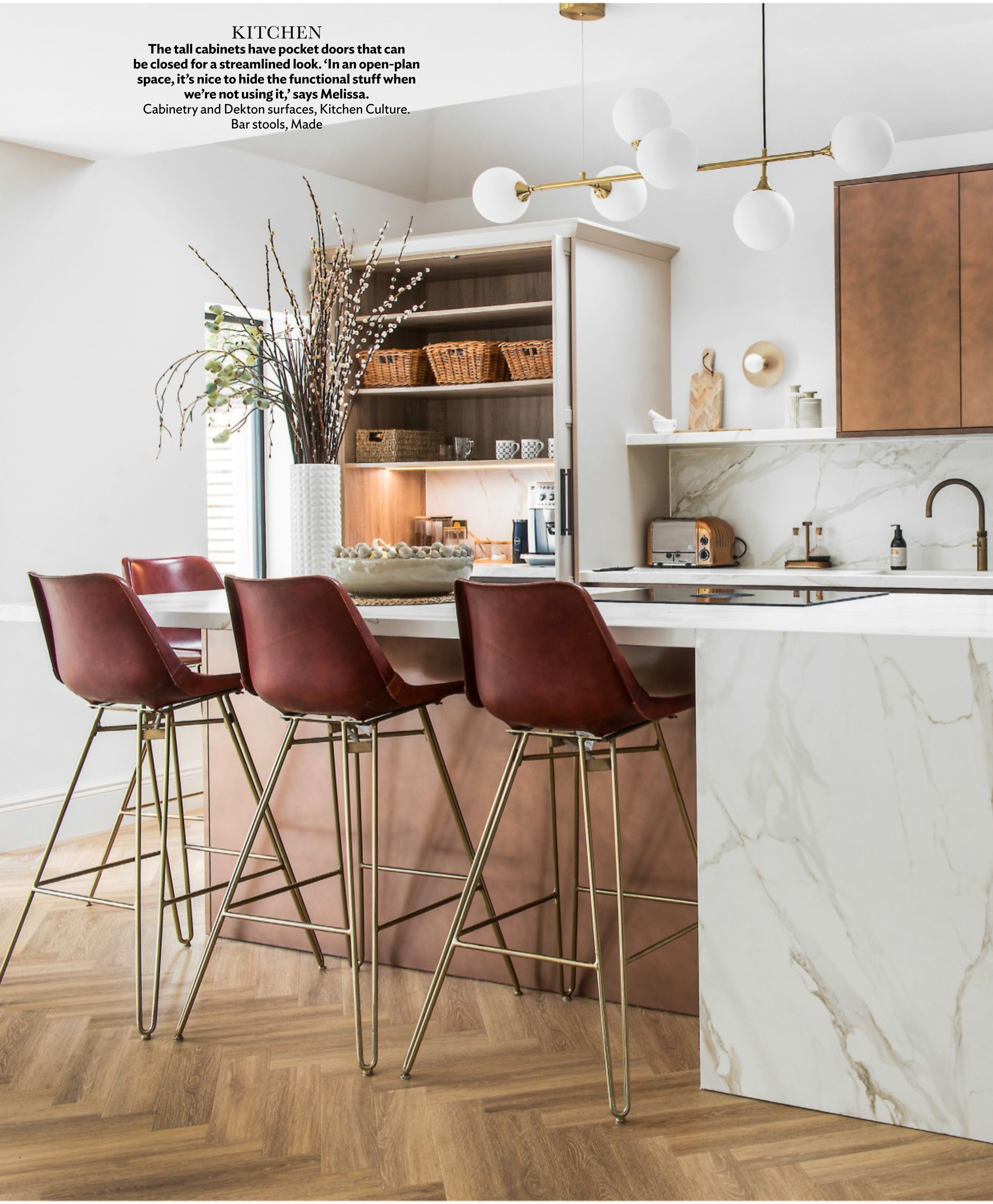
Location, location, location was the mantra when Melissa and James Spencer replaced a dilapidated property with a modern, custom-built home

WORDS ANNABELLE GRUNDY
PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE



SITTING ROOM

Symmetry gives this room its traditional, formal ambience. Melissa designed the coffered ceiling which, along with the marble fireplace, lends the room presence and a period feel.
Walls in Skimming Stone, Farrow & Ball. Marble fireplace, Surrey Fireplace & Stove Installation. Chandelier, John Lewis. Sofas, Made. Brooke wall lights, Soho Home. Art prints, Desenio



KITCHEN

The tall cabinets have pocket doors that can be closed for a streamlined look. 'In an open-plan space, it's nice to hide the functional stuff when we're not using it,' says Melissa.
Cabinetry and Dekton surfaces, Kitchen Culture.
Bar stools, Made

Over nearly 20 years Melissa and James Spencer have renovated, extended and updated each home they have had. The only thing left to do was to build their own, in their favourite location.

'I'd always longed to live in a particular spot a couple of roads away,' says Melissa, 'It's close to green spaces, but handy for facilities, and incredibly peaceful. We'd been thinking about our next move, now that our two sons are grown up, and when a property there came onto the market, we just went for it.'

The setting was the deciding factor, as the four-bedroomed 1950s house was ugly, old-fashioned and decrepit. After a lot of thought, James and Melissa concluded their best option was to demolish it. 'Then we could build the house we really wanted,' says Melissa, 'I love architecture and I had a clear vision, partly inspired by the beautiful white Regency houses I've seen in London, but with a modern interior.'

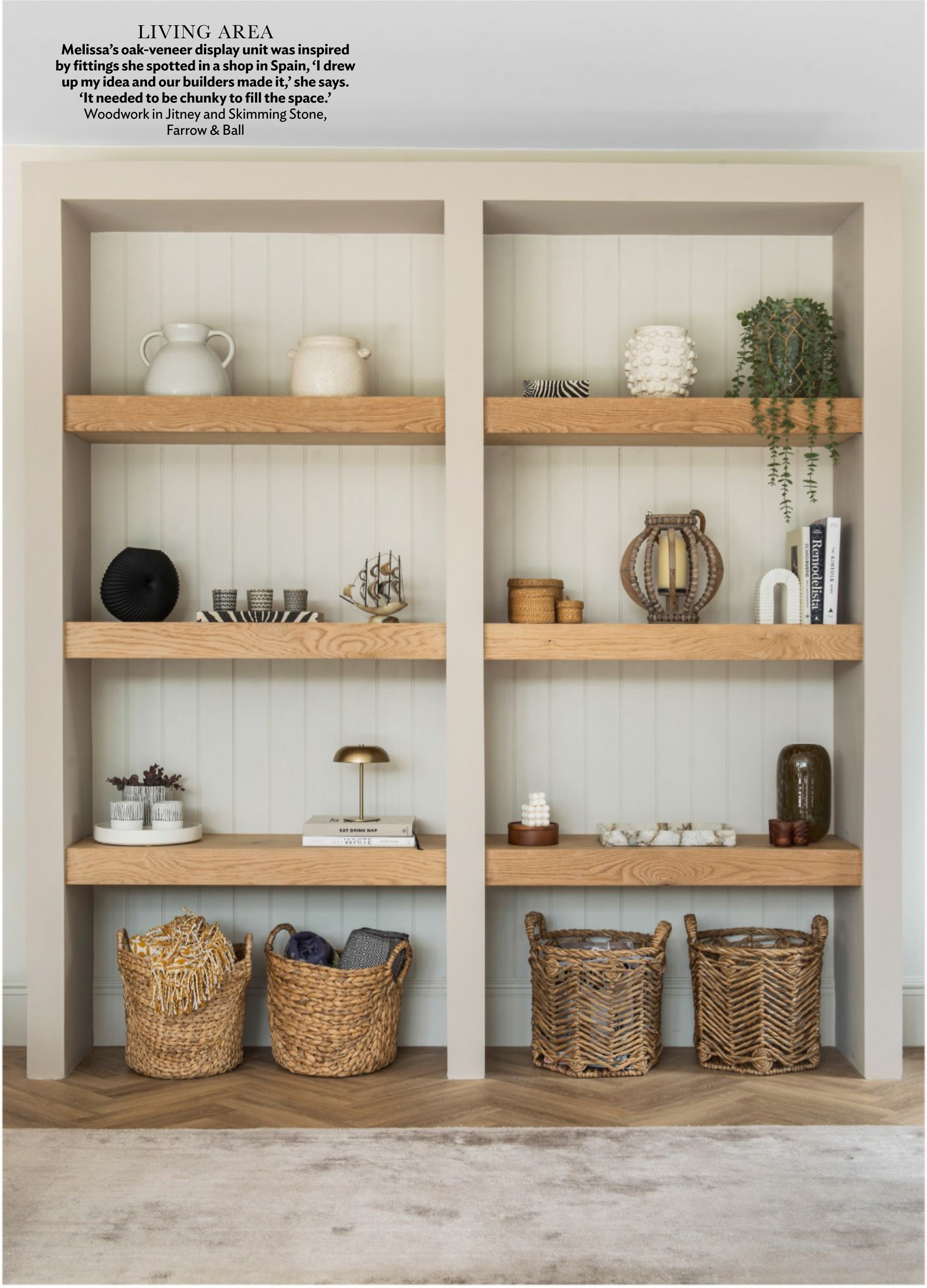
Drawing on previous experience and working with existing building contacts, the couple created a design to bring Melissa's ideas to life. They spent an uncomfortable year living in the old house while the planning process was completed. 'Before planning was granted we needed information on everything from wildlife surveys to energy consumption, so it was challenging,' says Melissa. 'I was designing the interiors for our new home, too, and looking at windows, floorings and lighting – it felt like a full-time job and I had to be really organised.'

Once work started, James and Melissa moved to a rented flat, but Melissa was constantly on hand, making decisions and answering questions. The build progressed smoothly and was completed within a year. The result is an elegant, airy home, combining modern, multifunctional living spaces with traditional elements. The ground floor has an office and a formal sitting room with a decorative, coffered ceiling and Carrara marble fireplace. At the back, the spacious open-plan kitchen, dining and living area has vast sliding glass doors opening onto a secluded garden. Upstairs are the beautifully appointed main bedroom suite and three more comfortable en-suite bedrooms.

Online Pinterest boards helped Melissa select the main features of each room, and integrate existing furniture into the new spaces. For cohesion, she used herringbone flooring through the entire ground floor, and repeated a neutral wall colour in several rooms. 'I've kept the interior light and simple,' she says, 'although I do like colour, a neutral base lets you add pops of colour in furniture and accessories.'

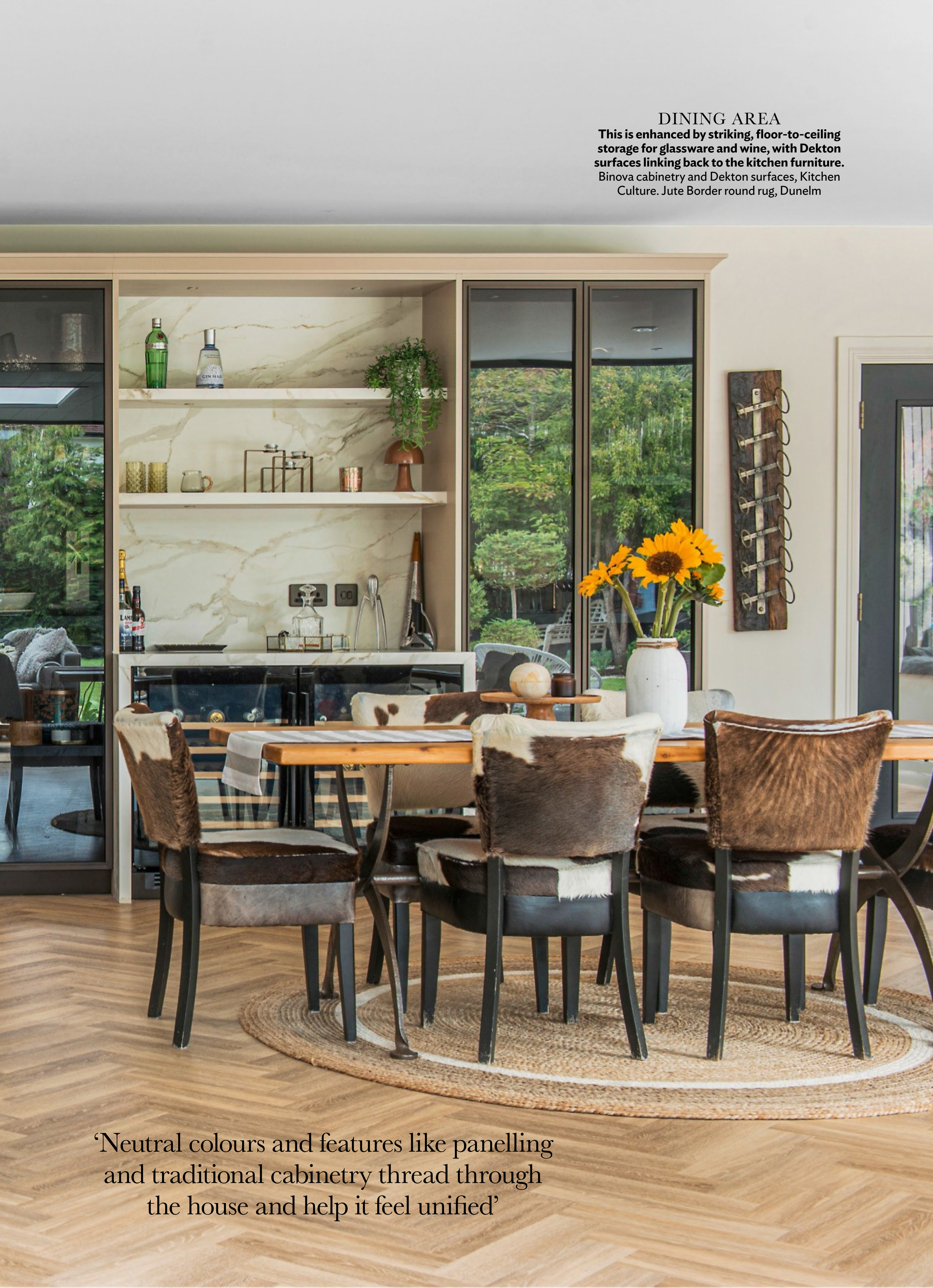
Light was a key consideration and large windows, glazed internal doors and thoughtfully positioned skylights draw natural light inside. One example is above the kitchen work area, where a vaulted ceiling with a glass panel creates a sense of height and brings daylight in.

Now settled in their new home, Melissa and James are delighted with what they have created and pleased they took a leap of faith. 'It was a passion project,' says Melissa, 'friends thought we were very brave, and it was hard work, but in the end we've built exactly the home we wanted.'


Remodelista
KINFOLK
EAT DRINK NAP
WHITE

LIVING AREA

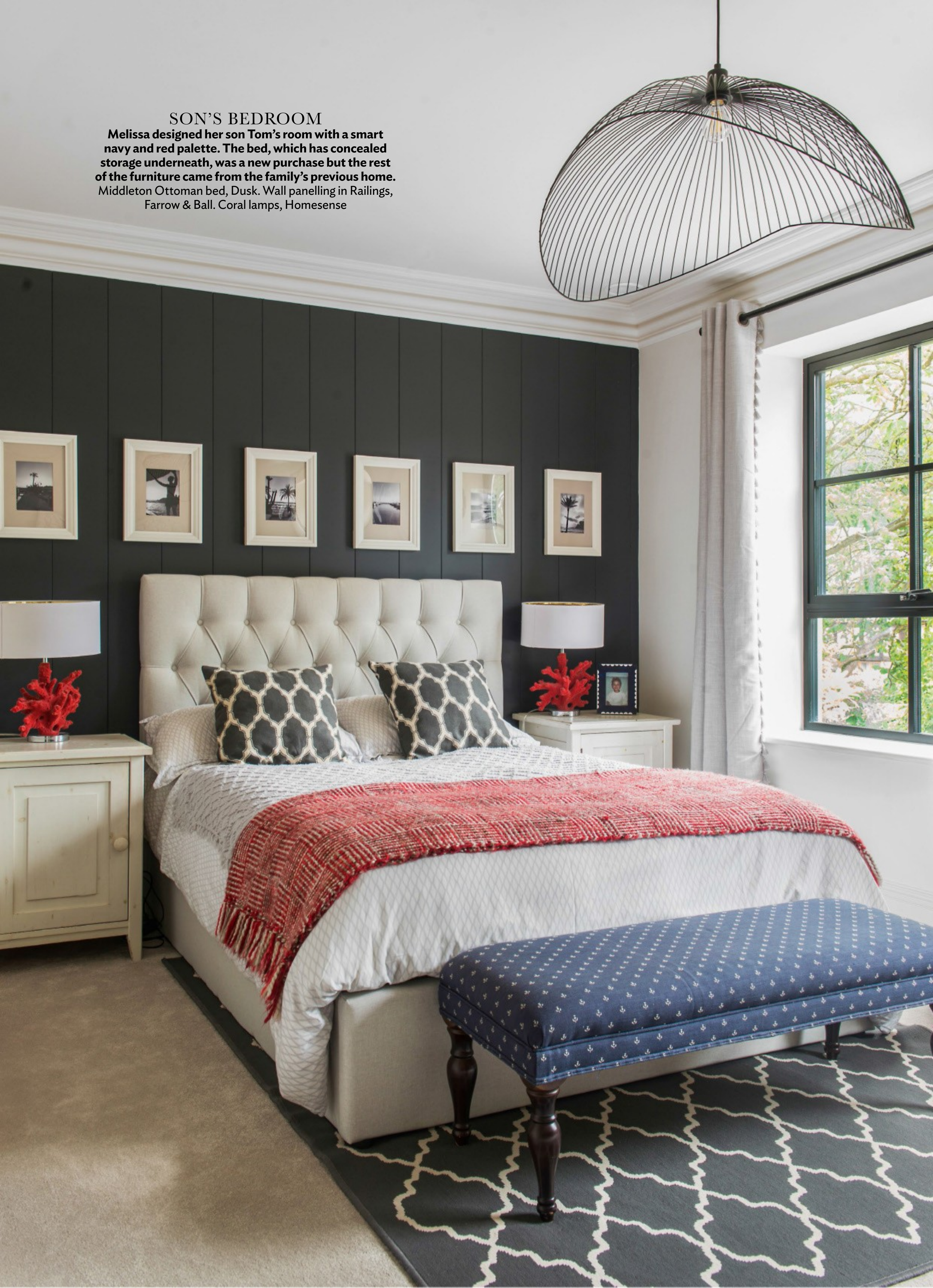
Melissa's oak-veneer display unit was inspired by fittings she spotted in a shop in Spain, 'I drew up my idea and our builders made it,' she says. 'It needed to be chunky to fill the space.' Woodwork in Jitney and Skimming Stone, Farrow & Ball



DINING AREA

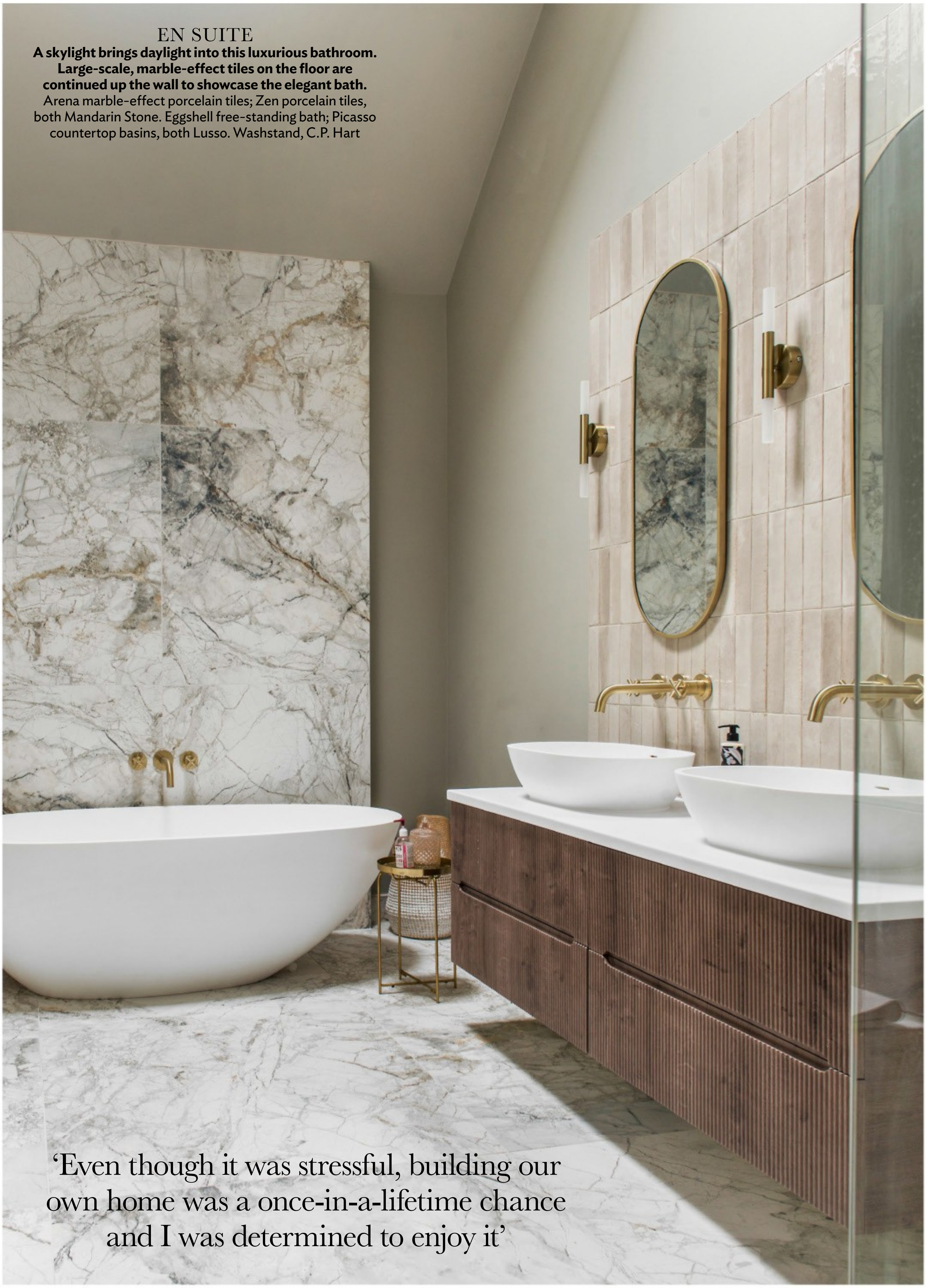
This is enhanced by striking, floor-to-ceiling storage for glassware and wine, with Dekton surfaces linking back to the kitchen furniture. Binova cabinetry and Dekton surfaces, Kitchen Culture. Jute Border round rug, Dunelm

> ‘Neutral colours and features like panelling and traditional cabinetry thread through the house and help it feel unified’



SON'S BEDROOM

Melissa designed her son Tom's room with a smart navy and red palette. The bed, which has concealed storage underneath, was a new purchase but the rest of the furniture came from the family's previous home. Middleton Ottoman bed, Dusk. Wall panelling in Railings, Farrow & Ball. Coral lamps, Homesense



EN SUITE

A skylight brings daylight into this luxurious bathroom. Large-scale, marble-effect tiles on the floor are continued up the wall to showcase the elegant bath. Arena marble-effect porcelain tiles; Zen porcelain tiles, both Mandarin Stone. Eggshell free-standing bath; Picasso countertop basins, both Lusso. Washstand, C.P. Hart

> ‘Even though it was stressful, building our own home was a once-in-a-lifetime chance and I was determined to enjoy it’

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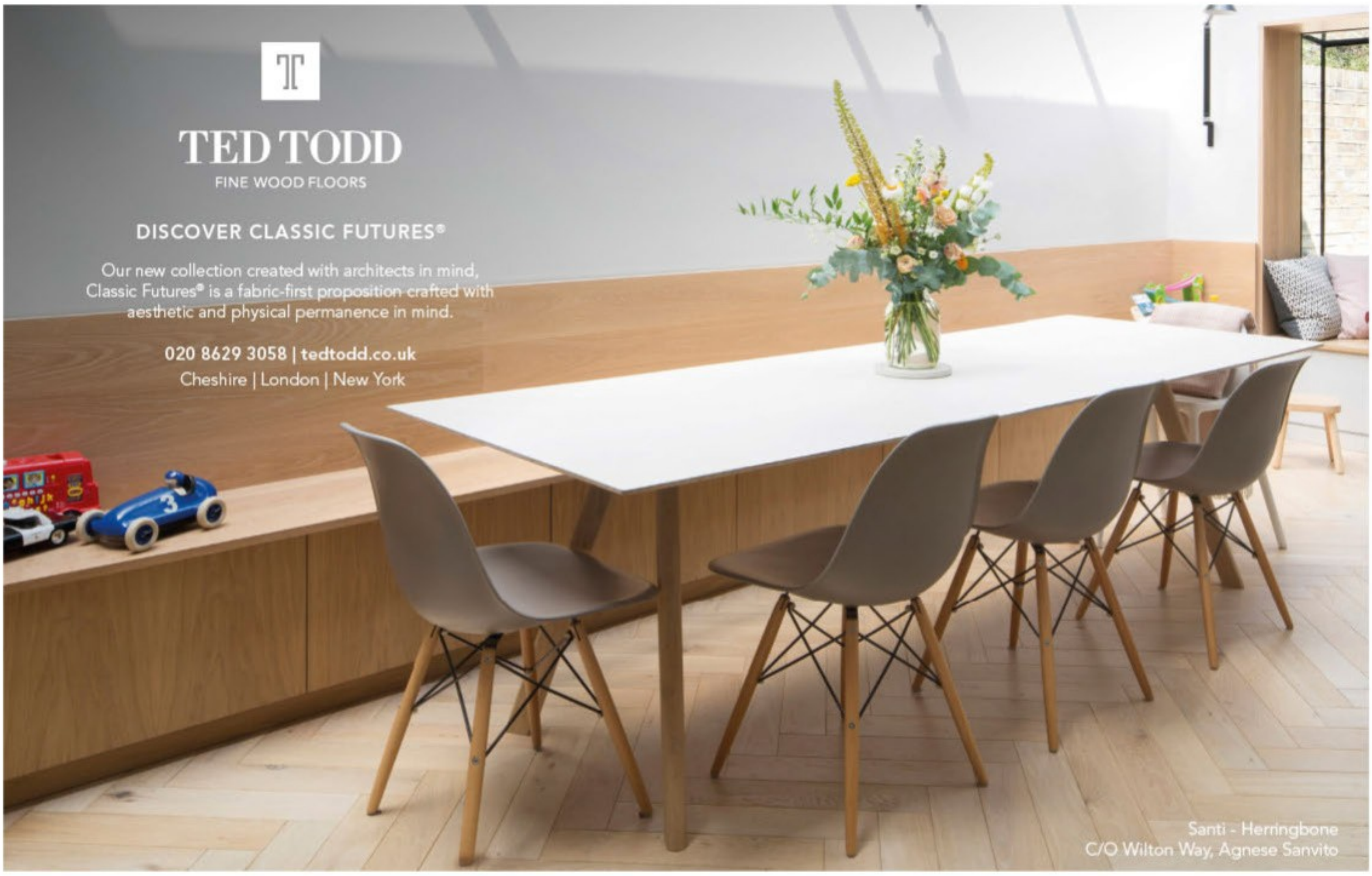

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STYLE *inspiration*

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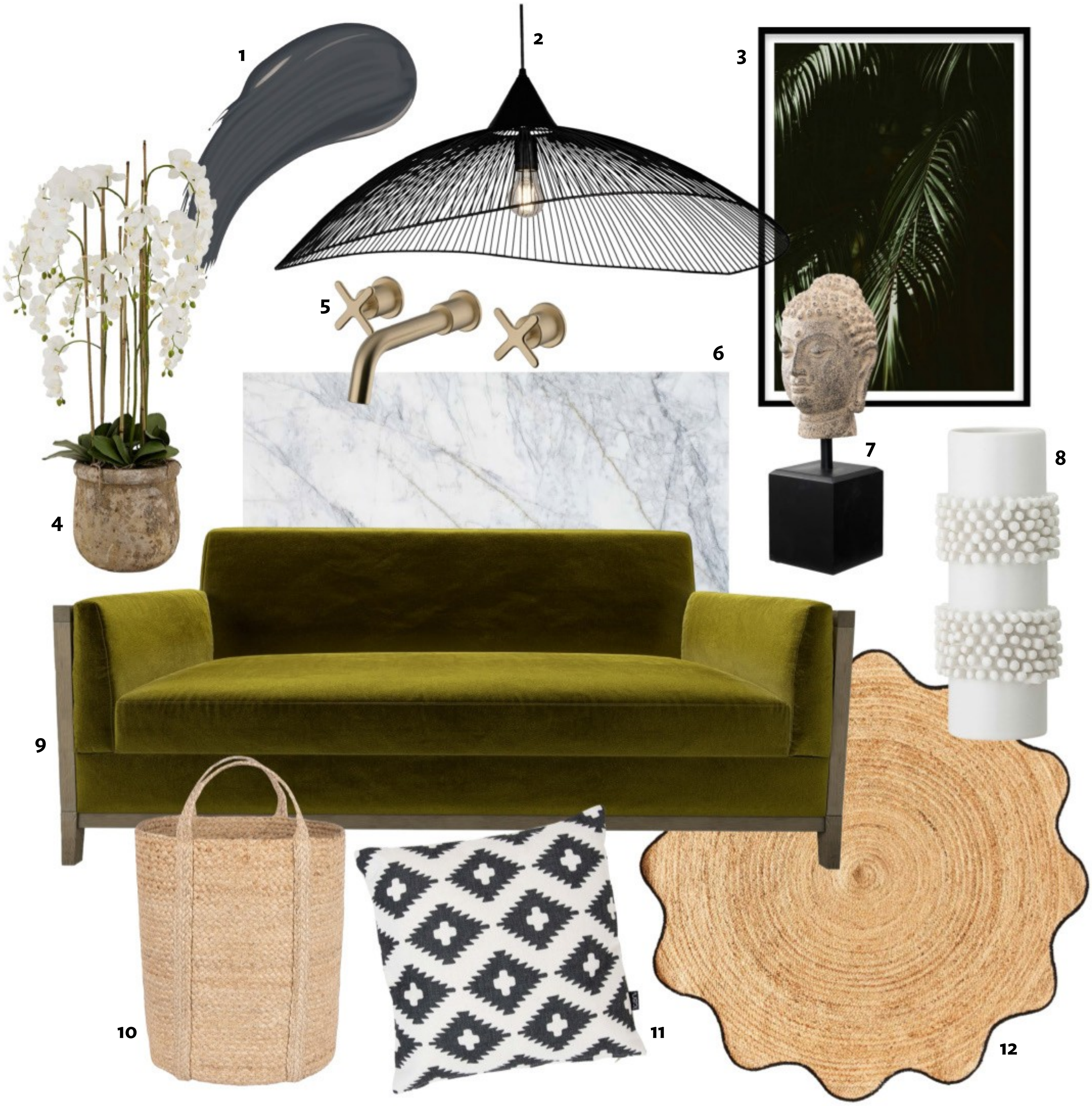

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